



ECONOMICS FOR IRISHMEN.





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LONDON, 26 LUDGATE HILL

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W. H. C. 1887  
2. 5. 1887  
1. 1. 1887

## PREFACE.

THIS is less an academic treatise than an attempt to show why Ireland goes out of existence as a nation, and its data are derived from direct observation of actual life and its conditions rather than from books or from party propaganda. In some ways the economic position of Ireland is unique, and requires the economist to work in the field and in the workshop rather than in the study.

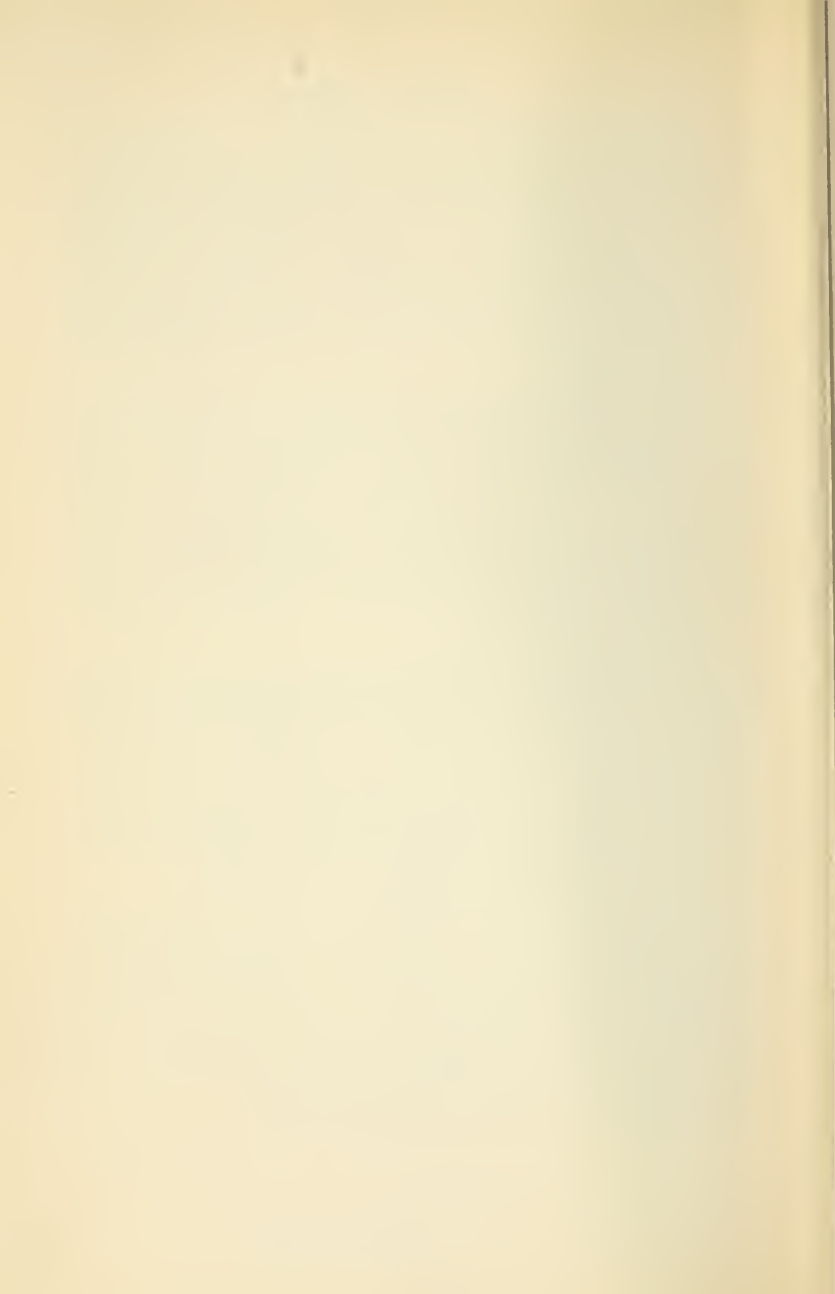
The critic will find the substance of the argument in Chapters XII. and XIII., but if some of the conclusions seem strange, it may be well to see whether these are not fully supported by the facts in the previous chapters. Unless the nation is to die out wholly, we must face truths that are as yet strange or new to us in Ireland, and there can hardly be a greater cause of decay than the fear of the people to discuss some of its main causes.

The plan of the work is for three little volumes, on Production, Distribution and Consumption, but with publishers asking for the first, I have decided not to defer its appearance for the completion of the other two. Hence the omission here of such questions as Transit, which had better be discussed under "Distribution," and such questions as Taxation, which properly come under the head of "Consumption."

As an economist, one must be concerned with the common good, as affected by Wealth and Industry, and it has been my aim to present the matter from a completely detached standpoint, uninfluenced by any of the sectional prejudices that help to keep the people of Ireland divided and poor and weak. We waste life quarrelling about our decay; let us rather study its causes and seek to overcome it.

PAT.

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

I AM writing a few simple chapters to encourage Economic thought in Ireland, where it is as much needed as it is neglected, like so many good things ; and more particularly I propose to apply some accepted laws and doctrines of the science to the Irish problems that prove so puzzling, especially among those who are most positive in their knowledge of them. In matters of this kind at least, Irishmen are so completely sure that they do not give themselves a chance to understand.

I start with a difficulty, in that I have to deal with a side of the Irish character which does not shine ; therefore, let me ask the patriotic reader to believe that I may be as proud as himself of the numerous aspects in which our character shines so brilliantly, and that any unflattering criticism I may have to offer is intended but to level up a department of Irish National thought which is not only behind the times, but which is also strikingly unworthy of the intellectual capacity of the Irish people.

Our national thought, and especially our Nationalist thought, confines itself largely to praising itself, which, in man or nation, is a sign of weakness, and a loss of the strength that comes of facing facts. Many of us love Ireland well enough to praise her, which makes us popular, and costs us nothing, but few of us love her well enough to make her strong by defining her errors to her. Before

entering on "Economics for Irishmen" in detail, let me submit some of my reasons for the attempt, not to justify it, but farther to illustrate the purpose.

The Irish people are gifted in mental and moral energies which, constructively directed, would soon turn the nation from death to life, but which, as things go, are wasted destructively, vitiating the agencies of progress, and in this derangement of our national structure, we have honest and patriotic Irishmen wasting their lives at their country's expense, from want of such constructive purpose and method as might easily be secured by a little economic thought. The nation is strong and healthy, yet dying, and death in a state of health is most painful. Nothing but the misdirection of her strength can account for such a state of things.

While Irishmen rarely approach their country's problems from the economic standpoint, it is probably the most essential standpoint of all, in the present circumstances, because the country lacks the material footing on which alone the higher developments of the national life can grow. Even religion itself suffers from the material disabilities of the people, who simply leave the country to escape them.

A nation, like an individual, must first make her living, which Ireland does not, and she is even more bound by this law than the individual, who, when he fails, may go to the workhouse, while we have no workhouses in which to save the lives of nations. The Irish Nation cannot begin to grow until she begins to make her living, which she cannot be said to do while her life diminishes by \*40,000 a year. The Science of Economics is above all things concerned with how a nation

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\* Since this was written the emigration figures have declined a little, but, of course, a diminished population cannot maintain an emigration undiminished.



may make her living ; hence its need to the Irish people, not to mention its value as an educative agency.

Our phenomenon of a rich country, inhabited by a poor and diminishing people, with ample expenditure on education, and at London's door, presents one of the most interesting economic problems in the civilised world, and demands the sincerest attention of everyone who pretends to be an Irishman, more especially of anyone pretending to be an Irish Catholic, if only because of the widely accepted belief that Ireland's Catholicism is the cause of her decay ; and this is scarcely more urgent than the farther question of our Catholic majority remaining in almost uniform ignorance of everything economic. Besides, the Catholics are the fugitives. In face of such facts, and in view of the wide-spread belief before mentioned, every Catholic priest in Ireland ought to be an economist ; yet I am assured on authority that no Economics whatever is included in the ordinary curriculum at Maynooth. It looks as if the very existence of our Catholicism had become a matter of indifference to those specially charged with its maintenance and propagation.

To my knowledge, some, at least, of the English Protestant Bishops decline to ordain any man without a pass in Economics, though the need for it is not half as great as among our own Catholic Clergy in Ireland. The only excuse I have heard is "the expense," which is no excuse at all. For £250 a year, one could undertake to start an effective School of Economics at Maynooth. How, then, can the "expense" explain our economic ignorance ?

Stranger yet, notwithstanding our economic ignorance, I find the Irish people naturally endowed with the economic faculty, and especially the priests, some of whom have lately surprised me pleasantly by their hospitality to the science and

by their capacity to grasp it, though they had never gone through even an elementary text book. In so far as I have met them, I have found in them an aptitude for Economics which, if brought out, might soon give us an economist in almost every parish, with incalculable advantage to this country. For example, it is the business of the Economist to study how the work of his neighbours affects their lives and that of the community; how each unit of wasted labour, from want of intelligent method or any other cause, is at once a loss to the individual and to the nation; and how, by economising this wasted energy, even in the simplest occupations of our lives, the reward is increased, life is levelled up, and the national basis brought nearer to a progressive footing. There is not a parish in Ireland where hundreds of opportunities to do this are not before our eyes, unseen, and though our priests ought to be glad to do it, if they saw how, it is never done. There is not a parish in Connacht from which young people do not fly every year, leaving behind them excellent opportunities to make a living, because there is no one with sufficient economic or industrial insight to show how these opportunities could be made to "pay." I cannot imagine a nobler or more patriotic purpose to put before our secular clergy, and my experience of them goes to show that they might do something if only their *alma mater* and their "atmosphere" fitted them for it.

There is something almost traditional in the persistence with which the Irish mind avoids the concrete and confines itself to the abstract. Christian philosophy must, of course, start from an order of things indicated by that preference, making the abstract the basis of the concrete itself, and it is not for me to presume to question that position, but I may point out that, in the interaction of these things, we often reach a situation in which the abstract, and even the spiritual,

suffers from want of attention to the concrete and the material. Ireland affords an example on a national scale. We are all agreed that the spiritual character of our people is lowered by their leaving Ireland, not to mention the volume of Christian life and character at home ; but we are also agreed that they leave through material causes, mainly that they cannot make a living in Ireland. Does not the spiritual suffer from want of attention to the material here ? It becomes a religious as well as an economic duty to consider how our people can be kept in Ireland, and it is a duty for parsons as well as for priests.

Were I a priest, I should, I think, regard it as a sin on my soul every time a young person emigrated from my parish while I might have shown him how he could have made an excellent living at home without the spiritual disadvantages commonly attributed to emigration. Again, we have to face the fact that though we regard ourselves as a very spiritual and very virtuous people, we are also a people rapidly disappearing from the face of the earth. Why does virtue thus fail to justify its existence ? Simply from want of the attention to material things which is necessary to co-operate with virtue itself. We supply the world largely with theologians, without running the faculty short at home ; therefore, if good theology could save Ireland, she could not be dying as she is. We have sung and prayed, "God Save Ireland," and still Ireland dies by 40,000 a year. It is because we do not try to save Ireland ourselves. God gave the Irish the capacity to save Ireland ; why do they not exercise it ? God gave them a rich country ; why do they not use it better than to make beasts fat and keep little children hungry ? There is something profanely flippant in so much shouting "God save Ireland," while never making the least attempt at it, and never giving the least

attention to the ways and means by which God might help Ireland to save herself.

Need I explain why I write at such length about the relations of economics to Theology? Our theologians are peculiarly situated to be our economists, and they will spread Economic thought if it be given to them. Were our priests but competent economists, the result could be of more value to Ireland than any number of free Parliaments; because economic considerations go to the very bottom of national life, while all things Parliamentary are comparatively superficial. The Irish people spend their time *talking* about the things on the surface instead of *thinking* about the things at the bottom, or acting on them. This is the material aspect of the matter, and apart from this, so long as Ireland decays, with vast numbers attributing her decay to her Catholicism, it becomes even a spiritual and religious duty on the part of our priests to study how Ireland is to make her living, which is essentially an economic undertaking. I am the last man in the world to question the value of a good sermon, but I believe also in having people to listen to it, and in having something for them to eat, that they may listen the better. We have never lacked good sermons. Indeed, Ireland is like a pulpit before a vanishing congregation, and if only for the sake of the sermons, I would respectfully ask the preachers to consider how soon, at the present rate, they will be without any congregation at all. We become a nation of lonely preachers, in prairie pulpits, addressing our sacred eloquence to cattle.

If there be one vice that stands out notably in the Irish character, as compared with other peoples, it is the vice of envy, and economic reflection shows us that, on the whole, we gain instead of losing by our neighbour's prosperity, our own being facilitated by it. A man who prospers in a neighbourhood

must, even in spite of himself, share his prosperity in some measure with his neighbours. Without so sharing it, prosperity remains comparatively impossible or useless to him. The greater his means, the more is his need for the services and the products of others. I have met a few Irish priests who recognised this harmony between Christian and economic teaching, but they are invariably priests who have been educated out of Ireland, for instance, Father Farrell, of Navan, the happy genius of Mr. James M'Cann's industrial projects there. I had not talked with him five minutes when I felt that he could not have been educated in Ireland, and when I asked him, he told me he had been educated in Paris. Of late I have seen an attack on Irish priests who are "mainly foreigners," but in so far as I can see, they are doing more to save the Irish nation than any other priests we have. In any case, my purpose is as far as possible to make an economist of every priest in Ireland, that we may have the nation's life studied and discussed by those who alone are free to discuss it.

Most of what I say about our clergy applies even more fully to the popular politician, who, for half a century, has led the nation in this ruinous fallacy: the assumption that the national life was a mere matter of party politics and Acts of Parliament. Out of this arose the farther fallacy that industry was the mere product of statutes, while it was much more true to say that statutes were the product of industry. A nation's party politics can never be more than a temporary, variable, fractional and superficial expression of its life, leaving all its deeper faculties and all its nobler characteristics unexpressed, and this has been done so completely in Ireland as to raise some doubt whether the people had any capacity for anything better than party politics. Generations of religion and politics

together have failed to prevent the death of the Irish nation at the rate of 40,000 a year, and this alone gives me the right to put it to the priest and the politician whether something more is not necessary. The missing factor is economic efficiency, so impressed and developed as to form the habits and the methods by which a nation can live and grow, whatever her government or its location. Let the popular politician, of whatever party, stick to his "principles" and talk as loudly as he likes; but let him no longer distort the life of a nation by setting himself up for its sole formula, attempting to include the nation in one of her minor fractions. I know no other civilised people capable of a national blunder so palpable and so persistent. The nation that assumes herself to be all politics is like the man that assumes himself to be all mouth, organised to shout and swallow, but not to think or to do. "Eloquence" has become a disease among us.

There is one Irish problem at the bottom of all others, and I have never yet seen it as much as mentioned by any Irishman. This I will call the psychological problem, and I mean by it the national mind in relation to the national destiny, and in relation to all the questions and problems embraced in it. The national mind is to the nation like the engine to the train, drawing everything else along with it, on the right track or the wrong, according as it is rightly directed. Now, had the national mind been directed in a vital course, we could not conceivably be a decaying nation; in other words, had the Irish nation directed her energies to make her living, she could not be dying. The only alternative is that, with a rich country, we remain poor and perish through our inherent incapacity; but that is a conclusion at once disproved by our success in all the walks of life outside our own country. The vital question to which Ireland must find the answer sooner or later is this—



“With a country that is naturally rich, why do we diminish and remain poor, while other peoples prosper and grow in poorer countries?” And my answer to it is—“Mainly the misdirection of the national mind in relation to the national destiny.” Had I not been satisfied that my fellow-countrymen possessed the capacity to progress, assuming their energies constructively directed, I should never have taken the trouble to write “Economics for Irishmen.”

This fatal misuse of the national mind in relation to the national destiny is particularly evident in at least two of its results—(1) Our failure to exercise the faculty for cause and effect, and (2) our narrow-mindedness. So far, our attempts to define the causes of our national ills have been distinctly discreditable to us as a thinking people. Though we may take it broadly as a truth that, in the life of a nation, no given effect is due to any single cause, and no given cause confined in its action to any single effect, yet the almost uniform habit of Irish public men is to pick out one particular cause and attribute everything to it; and the more insufficient these narrow standpoints are, the more uncompromisingly are they presented as absolute panaceas, the man who sees least talking most, and most loudly. I regret to have to say it, but I know no other people in the world less tolerant towards the differences inseparable from progressive thought.

The more I examine Irish public utterances of all kinds, the more I find them due to mere impulse rather than to orderly thought. We have leaders of men who assume that they are thinking when they are merely feeling and shouting their stale passion for the fortieth time, and I know no other country in which this kind of thing could pass for thought. It amounts to nothing else than a defect in our psychological equilibrium, a want of the true balance between heart and

head, between ideas and emotions, between thought and feeling. I would not discourage healthy feeling in any form, but I want to show that, unless always governed and shaped by constructive thought, it sinks to a mere mental vice instead of serving as a motive power impelling us to vital purposes. Had thought governed feeling with us instead of feeling having governed our thought and conduct, this nation would have learnt to make her living. Such is the psychological factor, and the most essential factor, in what they call "The Irish Question," and no person ought to be permitted to make speeches until he has learnt to think.

What we want, then, before all things else, is to create a standard of national thought, with reflection above feeling, and sanity above passion, that we may look calmly and think constructively on the forces at work on our nation; and I know nothing in our present circumstances more conducive to this end than a study of Ireland from the standpoint of the economist, with individual liberty for the nation's mind to influence her life and conditions. That is what I attempt in the chapters to follow, which, I expect, will be found simpler and more attractive to the ordinary mind than this somewhat abstruse introduction.



## CHAPTER II.

### WEALTH.

THE economist must have noticed in my last chapter an apparently heterodox discussion of our mental and moral peculiarities, as a source of our economic detriment—"the national mind in relation to the national destiny." I might have put it "the national character," instead of "the national mind," as a more comprehensively scientific term, but the intention is obviously the same. Since I wrote that chapter I have looked up Professor Marshall's latest edition of *Economics of Industry*, to keep in touch with accepted definitions, and found that he has anticipated me to the extent of making my heterodoxy orthodox. His newest definition of economics is a surprise and a pleasure to me—"Economics is a study of wealth, *and a part of the study of man.*" The second part of this definition is recent, and, I believe, a distinct advance in the science itself, and it harmonises accurately with my own attempt to study man in his Irish character and to suggest how that character tends to retard economic progress in Ireland.

In a book like this, devoted mainly to economic phenomena in Ireland, I cannot be expected to go much into detail in formal economic exposition. My need is rather to put each of my Irish discussions on a scientific basis, and to present sufficient of the science for that purpose. For detail, the reader might do well to follow an economic text book side by

side with my discussions, and I do not know a work more suitable than *Economics of Industry*—in its present form. Apart from the fact that it represents the best school of economists in these islands at present, its author, unlike so many other economists, has not done work that could be objectionable to Irishmen in other fields of thought.

Hitherto economics, called "Political Economy," has been defined as "the science of wealth," but economic experience and research have tended everywhere to enlarge and to correct that definition. No one can pursue any train of economic thought for any length of time without finding the needs and the motives of man underlying his data at essential points so fundamentally that I cannot but think "the study of man," instead of following, ought to precede "the study of wealth."

Wealth itself, except that small division of it called "Natural," is no more than an accident of man, arising out of his life, to extend his advantages and to react on itself for its increased economy under his direction. Why, then, should the permanent and primary cause not take precedence of the temporary and secondary effect in the scheme of a scientific treatise? Judging from the current tendencies of economic method, and from all I have been able to understand of economics, I am convinced that a time must come when the science shall be defined in some such way as this—"A study of man in relation to wealth." I think I could show many good reasons why this definition might farther advance the science, but this is not the place, and here I will take definitions as I find them.

I have ventured the above digression because the increased human and moral element in my suggested definition (partly anticipated in Professor Marshall's), would make the science

less discordant to the Irish National psychology. It ought to be of interest to Irishmen to know that the tendency of modern development in economic science is in what we may call the Irish direction, taking into account factors of feeling and moral impulse that were comparatively ignored by the explicit but rigid dogmatism of Stuart Mill and his co-creators of "the economic man." The brightest hope I can see for the Irish is in bringing their grand moral energy under scientific method, on reconstructive and reproductive lines. Do this without vitiating that energy itself, and we have a people prolific in great nations, fit to dominate empires, instead of making a decadent scene of social friction, turning its most vital forces into agents of its own destruction.

A definition of economics which tends to the mere material, ignoring the moral and æsthetic consideration of wealth and of its uses, can not appeal strongly to the Irish until they have undergone a mental and moral transformation which I would not care to attempt at present. In the past, all our definitions have tended too exclusively to the material, and Professor Marshall's "part of the study of man" is plainly a recognition of the error and an attempt to correct it. His context expands on moral and non-material lines in accordance with his amended definition, and that is why I particularly recommend his work to Irish readers. For example, he recognises that "economic motives are not exclusively selfish," and observes that the basis of capital is "family affection"—an effort on the part of people to spend less than they might, for the benefit of those to whom they are attached or who have claims on them. Capital must of necessity come out of the difference between what people have and what they spend, so that family attachments tend to make capital grow, and thereby to perfect the industrial system. Were it not for the

unique loyalty of the family unit in Ireland, especially among the peasantry, the economic process must have been degraded among us even more than it is, and were it not for the fine instinct with which the people have always extended the analogy of the family tie to its national application, I do not see how our nationality could have survived the unequal and unfair forces deliberately employed for so many centuries to destroy it.

Though I have been severe on our Irish indifference regarding economic truth, I doubt even now whether I would not leave our economic ignorance unredeemed rather than impose on the Irish mind any such cast-iron conception of life as Stuart Mill and the "Manchester School" inflicted on the British, with the result of subordinating human flesh and blood to the convenience of dividends at home and the "control of the markets abroad." To this day English industry, and especially Lancashire industry, has been developed on the lines of providing for savages at the expense of the bodies and souls of Englishmen and their families; and now, after generations of it, I find in places like Oldham a new race of people, dwarfed and distorted in the factories—and bearing a large proportion of Irish names, though otherwise unrecognisable as the descendants of our peasantry. How can I join in a view of wealth or of life, which derives profits from the demoralisation of men, or accept without reserve a definition of economic progress which demands their decay? Call economics "The study of Man in relation to wealth," and all this comes within the scope of science; the economist has then to distinguish between the uses of wealth that degrade and those that benefit, as Ruskin has already done by his expressive use of the term "illth"; and a new field of economic research is laid open, on a plane far higher and much nearer to

the fundamental purpose of economic science than any yet explored. The whole civilised world is now craving for a genius who could write "The Economics of Social Energy," which is really the primary purpose of all economic study, and in which economics as now scientifically enunciated would take the subsidiary place to which it properly belongs, instead of deifying a rigid materialism in which "Wealth accumulates and men decay." In the cult of the "practical," the British have imposed on themselves a tyranny of wealth-worship which constitutes the most vital of their national dangers, and probably the Americans are worse still in this respect.

The middle classes of England, among whom I have spent many pleasant years, are now making a brave struggle to reach up to the level of the destitute Irish peasantry, by providing themselves with an ideal above wealth-worship. In all their poverty, the Irish people have achieved something better than this. At any point, they afford proofs of their consciousness that there is something superior to wealth, something which wealth could never buy, however much it might influence it; and I often reflect on the Manchester millionaire, groaning under the tyrannies of his own success, and wishing in vain that he could exchange half his wealth for some of the simple essentials to life that he has lost for ever, or for the vital integrity of the man who smiles at fate from under the thatch of a Connacht cottage. There is a side of the Irish mind which, however ignorant of economics, has grasped truths more vital still; there is an intense capacity for devotion to ideals accepted as true, a rooted sense of moral honour in claims of long association. This intensity characterises all our creeds and classes. It is proved even by its degradation in our bigotries. I would not farther vitiate the

motive force of that intensity by materialising it in wealth-worship, but I would harmonise it with the necessities of progressive life, and turn its destructive power to constructive purpose.

There is no great need, however, to warn the Irish people at present against the evils of excessive prosperity, or of over specialised self-application in pursuit of wealth ; and what I want to show is that while the British have erred to the point of calamity in the material direction, the Irish have erred as ruinously in the opposite direction, conscious of their own decay, ignoring its material causes, and attributing it to something else, with little more than the unreasoned hope of raw eloquence as a remedy. No great nation has ever been made or unmade merely by speech makers, Parliaments, or their locations ; and I am dealing with the forces that make Parliaments rather than with those that obey them. Let the Irish nation act with sane constructiveness of purpose, and it may have its Parliaments when and where and how it pleases. Few things discourage me more concerning our future than to consider how little solid knowledge of our own country and of ourselves we have evolved from our enormous sacrifice of energy and ability to public life. In so far as I have met them on both sides, English colliers know more about England than Irish Members of Parliament know about Ireland. Still in spite of this, and in all our poverty, we have sustained an integrity of mind and manhood which might have been degraded by prosperity ; and now it remains for us to level up on the material side without levelling down on the nobler side. We have the economic experience of mankind to guide us in this, which ought to make us feel grateful to the economists, notwithstanding their cast-iron "economic man."

I have been leading up to the need for a school of economists of our own. Our economic data are more than



sufficiently distinctive and characteristic for it, and I think the national mind is resourceful for it. Not to go beyond the matter of wealth or the definition of economics, the Irish as a nation cannot readily accept the current conception of it, because that conception is in conflict with acceptations more precious to them than anything economic ; and the need is the more because the development of the science itself tends to correct the too material scheme by a conception with something of a heart and soul in it. The earlier economists proceeded rather as if man had neither heart nor soul. They built a science round wealth alone, as if human nature had no concern in it beyond being its instrument. Should the Irish ever become an economic people in thought and practice, it must be, I trust, with a higher, a truer, and a more human conception of wealth than that.

A favourite conception of wealth among formal economists is, "Anything that can be sold or bought," and we may as well have the definition here, with all its defects, to keep us in touch with what is taught as well as contrasting with what I should prefer to see accepted in Ireland. While the means to degradation are "bought and sold" every day, there are always factors essential to a people's wealth which can never be bought or sold at all. The things most worth having in life are above all price, yet to be had for nothing.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE AGENTS OF PRODUCTION.

THE usual plan of economic writers is to give extensive chapters to each of the Agents of Production in succession, without any reference to the next, or the next again, on which the first depends for significance. On this plan, the student is required to equate the unknown as he proceeds, without data, which often makes the task very discouraging. The full meaning of each agent can be seen only in relation to the others ; therefore, it will be at once more simple and more scientific to deal first, broadly, with all the agents together, showing their general relations to one another, and their co-relations to the production of wealth, and then proceed to more special study of each separately.

The Agents of Production are "Land, Labour and Capital," and the production of wealth depends first on their efficiency in themselves, and, secondly, on their association in the process. In a normal, healthy condition of things, with men free and capable to obey their economic motives, the growth of wealth naturally follows the presence of its agents of production, because the inducements and facilities to associate and organise the agents are not hindered ; but when we see the agents ample in themselves, yet with production declining, and labour emigrating, we know beyond question that there is something abnormal and unhealthy. This is the case in Ireland, and it remains for us to lay bare the unhealthy and



abnormal forces which thus derange our industrial system, and drive the Irish out of Ireland. The immediate cause of the ruin is the derangement of the agents and of the productive process ; but in dealing with a people like ours, it is necessary to show how the derangement comes about, and to demonstrate the connection between it and the national history and character ; in other words, the force of the immediate cause becomes more apparent in the ultimate causes. One of our greatest hindrances is the want of individual liberty, a matter wholly in our own hands.

With us, land, labour, and capital go a-begging. We are a people particularly richly blessed by material resources, but not knowing how to turn these into progressive life in the productive process. When I say that a fall in rent is a sign of decay, or that a rise in rent is a sign of prosperity, I am only stating an economic truth of universal application ; yet I know that in many minds the statement will at once set me down as a "landlord's man." This is how passion and prejudice, dominating truth, prevent us as a people from seeing our own interests and acting in accordance with them. While rent falls, land becomes more accessible, financially at least, and as to labour and capital, we are continually providing them for other countries, out of our poverty and economic decay. I have often thought of individualising economic Ireland in one man to make concrete and objective our economic peculiarities as a people, and if I could describe that man accurately, he would certainly appear to a thinking world as an economic fool.

It is not, then, from lack of the agents, or of any of them, that we remain unproductive and decay, but because we have failed to bring the agents together in the productive process, as men have done in all progressive countries. Here we reach the very bottom of the Irish economic problem.

Critics and demagogues will account for the derangement of the agents according to their respective prejudices, each putting the blame on his neighbour, and calling him names to emphasise the charge for the benefit of his mob; but the derangement remains, perpetuated by the prejudices, even at the mob's expense, and must so continue until the collective mind learns to see Ireland from a different point of view and in a different temper. This fundamental derangement of our industrial factors is a complex result of complex causes, some of them old, some historical, many external, but most of them domestic and contemporary, traceable to our own cherished peculiarities as a people. The immediate question for our statesmen, politicians, and journalists is "How have the agents of production been deranged in Ireland; how can we get 'land, labour and capital' associated in their normal functions for the benefit of our race and country?" It is for the economist to define the problem, and to assert the laws behind it; it is not for him to plunge among the passions that prevail over the solution. At a more suitable stage, I will deal more fully with the data of the problem, and the cause of the derangement.

Observe the alarm that takes place in England when land, labour and capital are temporarily divorced by a strike. I remember a coal strike in the North which lost the contract of the Hamburg Gas Works to the shippers of the Tyne. The stuff was supplied from the new coal-fields of Germany, assisted by a railway subsidy from the German Government, and so an industrial displacement came about which will probably never permit the old state of things to be quite restored. I could fill a whole book with such examples. Now, if the English take alarm at an event like this, in a single industry, what of Ireland, where that derangement of the agents of production

is a permanent and almost general condition? In effect, Ireland is the scene of an incessant strike, in almost all her industries, keeping land, labour, and capital permanently apart. making the growth of wealth impossible, starving Irish labour and shipping it to foreign countries, with the capital that might employ it profitably at home sent out perhaps in the same ship. We pay a ruinous price for the luxury of indulging the passions and prejudices which keep us permanently blind to the causes of our decay.

Since the agents of production are all essentials, a defect in any one means a defect in the joint result. They are like the elements in a chemical compound or the three legs of a stool. In Ireland two of the legs are permanently lame, land alone standing normally efficient, just because it is less destructible and less subject in its final disposal to the vagaries of the national mind. You cannot ship Irish land to other countries. It remains here, notwithstanding the enormous national follies that keep it permanently so useless to us.

On this three-legged stool, with two legs broken, the immortal nation, nearly dead, sits unsteadily, however much we may disguise it in patriotic and spiritual illusions. From this precarious base, some offer to put us straight with tin pikes and Emmet breeches, others with "visions" into pre-historic paganism, and others with judicious mixtures of American turkey-cocks, hackney stallions, and Scotch bulls, all amiable irrelevancies that might come suitably enough, and even usefully, had it not been that they help to disguise our essential needs; and such is the sensitive altitude of our mental pride that no one will look down at the broken pediments of the national foundation. Now and then an excessive lopsiding of the structure causes an increased rush to the emigrant ship, deserting the visions and the Emmet breeches

among emptied porter barrels—and yet critics have called us a people with “a keen sense of the ridiculous.”

We seem to be altogether too clever to attend to the simple things that make an industrial nation, the countless humble duties in which collective efficiency begets collective strength, operating through the agents of production, among other things. We are often ashamed of these duties, even when they are our business in life—not long ago a peasant apologised to me for ploughing! In a nation of gentlemen, among whom a gentleman means an idler, who is to do the things by which the nation lives? Were these things done, the nation could not be dying. It is not by being “gintlemen” that we can make the agents of production work together; it is rather by being men—especially free men and brave men.

The economic value of education requires a separate chapter, but here I may mention how it affects the agents of production. I remember a time when Connacht peasants, barefooted, learned “The Principles of Politeness and the Dignity of Manners” in hedge schools; and not three years ago I saw Father Finlay’s profoundest selections from “In Memoriam” in the hands of fifth-class children, the teacher telling me that he did not understand the thing himself, and that even if he did, he could not communicate it to the pupils. It was in a Congested District, where the potato blight is like a perennial plague, and where nothing is ever taught about the potato plant, though the elementary science of it, apart from its industrial value, ought to be as educative to Catholic children as the incomprehensible prospects of Hallam’s immortality or the metaphysics of his philosophic doubt. A knowledge of the potato might help to bring land, labour, and capital into productive harmony, but I suppose it is not considered sufficiently ornamental for bare-footed peasants. We are an ornamental people—hungry.

Our peasant wants to be a "gintleman," and to keep a public house; our publican, being always a "gintleman" already, wants to become an aristocrat and to go into society; and our aristocrat, thus forced to find a new sphere, wants to get out of Ireland and hide his outraged dignity in some foreign Democracy. They all want to do anything rather than honestly and manfully justify their existence at home. Meantime, in the countries that progress, all classes co-operate in their respective ways in building up an industrial basis to support a social life. In Ireland, our classes are as much deranged as our agents of production, with which they correspond very instructively; indeed, the double derangement is but a dual aspect of the same phenomenon.

At college, I knew a young German who had come to England for a university course, and who had devoted his life to buttons. His father was a button-maker, and the son came to college that he might become an educated man, and thereby a better master of the button business. He chose an English university that he might extend his experience, learn the English language, and study English commerce more conveniently. He often showed me piles of buttons on cardboard, in endless variety, and no matter which I pointed out, he could immediately mention the parts of the earth for which it was made, passing from China to Peru as readily as from Berlin to Elberfeld. They had an agent in London to sell their buttons, and the youth kept continually in touch with him. It was buttons that had given him a university education, and he meant that education to react on the buttons. My brother Celt who has read so far is probably now laughing at my German and his buttons, but my German is now an educated gentleman, at the head of a prospering concern, employing increased numbers of his fellow-countrymen, while my brother

Celt, laughing, may await the passage money to America, where he will be very glad of some useful work which he would be ashamed to do at home. What does it matter, buttons, beasts, boots or steam engines, so long as it is in the way of bringing material, energy, and capital together, producing wealth, enlarging life, defeating decay and advancing the national vitality? We do not understand industry, even in an elementary way, until we have seen its dignity as the material basis of social life, with buttons and steam ships in the same category, measured in their importance, not by their names, but by the extent of their contributions to life.

Contrast the Irishman, especially the Celt, who is in a position to send his son to a university. Has anyone ever known the graduate accepting his self-development as an asset towards the greater growth of his father's business—or of any other business? His aim is “a profession,” at any price, and failing that, he goes to starve in a foreign city rather than face the “indignity” of making himself useful at home, in the pursuit that produced the means to his education. A Catholic University in Ireland might alter this, but on the other hand, secular education makes for economic inefficiency wherever it is presided over by the clergy, and even the National schools, with priests as managers, continue to make the peasants despise industry. I was a short time in an Irish National School, and before I escaped, I could see how the “atmosphere” made us look down on the means by which we lived. A sum of Irish energy, expensively elaborated to make it expert, is thus detached for ever from Ireland, and, may be, from the world.

Then, it may be taken broadly that the professional pursuits are the non-productive pursuits, so that even when our graduate succeeds, the chances are heavily against his whole life making any economic return even for the cost



of clothing him. He may make an income of £5,000 a year, and his country may be the poorer rather than the richer by his existence. Thus, as a result of our national peculiarities of taste and purpose, our very education itself, even at its best, tends to deepen the divorce of our agents of production, first by detaching from industry the cost of producing the man, and then by detaching the man himself; and the greater the capacity supposed to be produced in him, the more destructive and the more complete is his detachment. In other words, our higher education is made a means to keep us poor. In the ornamental sense, they call this "educating" a man; in the economic sense, it is corrupting him. In the countries where production grows, and life advances, education is so directed as to harmonise and strengthen the agents of production instead of degrading and divorcing them; the higher abilities are employed to direct labour and capital in acting on material, turning it into wealth, extending life and elevating its possibilities. Let the Irish people make up their minds once for all that until our land, labour and capital come into closer and more normal relations with each other, production cannot be advanced, labour cannot be employed, emigration cannot be stopped, and the decay of the Irish nation cannot be checked, no matter how much of the Irish language we may teach to the diminishing remnant.

I see it commonly assumed that the Protestants of Ireland are wiser in this respect than the Catholics, and that their higher education tends more to industrial efficiency, but a recent number of Trinity College Calendar shows me about half the resources of that institution expended on theology, and only two individuals down for the engineering school in that year. If the Catholics are worse than this, in the economic sense, then their case must be a very bad one, and I am

afraid they are worse. However, in Ireland, all education seems to start from some theological standpoint, never from the standpoint of fitting the people to bring together the agents of production, and so to make a living in their own land.

Gaelic Leaguers may quarrel with me now, but they will agree in proportion as they come to a fuller understanding of their country. Meantime, let them consider this—Why do “Irish Ireland” and emigration continue side by side, after twelve years of the former as the accredited antidote of the latter? While more and more of us become more and more Irish, why do fewer and fewer of us remain to become anything? Years and years after the Gaelic League has “triumphed,” and after the Irish language has been largely revived, why the need to start an “Anti-Emigration Society”? All this strange association of phenomena is because the primary forces at work have not yet been defined to the Irish people. The causes of emigration are primarily economic, in all other countries as well as this, and if the Anti-Emigrationists mean to be of real service, let them become Irish economists.

Do not take me as intending a hostile criticism of the Gaelic League, with which I am in the fullest sympathy. I am only trying to show that, in the modern conditions of Ireland’s life, the material basis must be considered in any definition of revival. Let us frankly face the fact that the Gaelic League, like *Economics for Irishmen*, stands for only one aspect of the national life; and that there are many other aspects, numerous and complex in proportion to the national life itself, each requiring its own peculiar freedom, “movement,” and form of expression. Take our average man, and let him stand for the nation. In proportion to his faculties, he wants free exercise for them, that is, life. He is happy and



progressive only in proportion as he is free to find congenial exercise for his faculties—"harmony between constitution and conditions." In accordance with his faculties, he has interests, economic, social, political, moral, literary, scientific, etc. Narrow him at any point, and to that extent you crush him. How can it be otherwise with the nation? A nation wants activities in as many fields as it has faculties, and on as many planes. How do the Irish movements stand in the light of these common truths? The great fatal peculiarity of all our movements in the past has been a narrow-minded assumption of their all-sufficiency and infallibility, making the fraction stand for the whole, at the expense of all the other fractions; and there are now too many dangers of degrading the Gaelic League to the same fatuous level. Let us understand our nation as a normal organism, not as a monster meant to go mad in pursuit of a single impulse, at the expense of all other departments of the normal life and character.

I have dealt with the agents of production as they are presented to me by economists, but "land, labour and capital" are inaccurate terms. Take the making of a kid glove—labour and capital acting on leather. Where does the land come in? It produced the beast that produced the skin that provided for the leather, but it takes no direct part in the making of the glove. Then take all the products and properties of air and water that co-operate productively with labour and capital. Similarly, the energy acting with material and capital in production is not wholly "labour." In two generations, the "pick-stick" in a cotton loom has multiplied its strokes by more than four, with more than four times the out-put of cloth, while the actual "labour" expended has been rather lessened; and I could give even more striking instances of how mechanical development has supplemented human energy in other depart-

ments of industry. There are similar considerations concerning capital, but I fear they would prove too technically subtle for our present purpose.

At lecture, Professor MacKenzie was fond of substituting "matter, force and time," or "matter, force and abstinence," for the "land, labour and capital" of older economists. The term "matter" would include not only land, but also its products in any form contributing to wealth production, as for example the leather in the glove or the limestone in the smelting of iron. In like manner, "force" would include not only "labour," as understood by the personal energy of man applied to production, but also the energies that supplement and economise it, as in the case of the improved "pick-stick" or the little petrol motor which, at a cost of £30, can do the churning, the threshing and the chaff cutting in a farmyard. Capital is "wealth used in the production of further wealth." "Though used (or spent), it is saved"—because embodied in the further wealth produced with its assistance. It must, however, be saved before it can be spent; that is, some person or persons must have abstained from spending a portion of what they had, and were free to spend, which requires "time." It may now be seen how much better are Professor MacKenzie's "matter, force and time" than the "land, labour and capital" of his predecessors. This is purely academic, but not the less applicable to Ireland.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE AGENTS OF PRODUCTION—LAND.

WERE the task merely to outline a system of Economics, less might be said of land than of either of the two more important agents of production ; but the greater need is to hunt down an agrarian fallacy, which, in this peculiar country, requires more writing about the land than about labour and capital together. This alone indicates how the nation's productive powers, and therefore its life, are disorganised and degraded. The people can live only by production, and production depends on its agents working together, each of the three being an essential ; therefore, to lose sight of labour and capital, while confining attention to land alone, must hinder and destroy the nation's means to live. The individual knows quite well how he must always go on producing, to enable him to buy the products of others and to live, and from this we can see how he lives well or ill according to his productivity ; but this is equally true of the nation, which must starve and decay in proportion as the agents of production are misdirected in themselves or dissociated from the productive process. I must drive home this fundamental truth, even if I have to repeat myself often.

The fallacy I have to expose is to my own mind so plain that I wonder how the national mind comes to be completely dominated by it. Were the Irish naturally a stupid people, it would be more easily accounted for, but a people of many

mental gifts, dominated and destroyed by their own wilful adhesion to an obvious fallacy is a matter which one cannot pass lightly. I have examined this fallacy from every point of view, and on every applicable economic standard known to me, but no matter on what course I have set out, I have always arrived at the same result—that it is a fallacy, presented by public sanction and by organised effort as a doctrine of national life. This is the peculiar destructiveness of it.

If we saw a man walking over a cliff, we should conclude that he was either mad, blind, drunk, or all three, but when we see a nation doing so, a curious deference to the dignity of numbers restrains our adjectives. Crimes of all sorts cease to be indictable in their national dimensions, that is, at their worst, and I suppose collective suicide must go with the rest.

This vanishing throng called the Irish nation, on the way over their too visible cliff, never lack honest leaders to go down by turns in the interminable tragedy—I think Ireland has the most honest and the most incapable set of politicians in Europe. Our deranged enthusiasm reminds me of the sacred mountain of Omei-Shan, in Western China, where, for thousands of years, the devotees, following a fallacy of their own, have hurled themselves to pious destruction over a precipice. In certain conditions of the atmosphere, they see far below a crescent of rainbow effects, which they call “The Glory of Buddha,” and when it is “full on,” the soul set free among it “must go straight to heaven,” like an Irish patriot made “immortal” for leading his country astray. Dare to explain how it is all a mere accident of refraction, and you will be treated with great suspicion, if not boiled in oil—as if you were an economist in Ireland. To my cultured Catholic reader, this rainbow religion of the Chinese must seem absurd, but let me assure him that it is not at all more absurd,

and that it is far less destructive, than the rainbow statesmanship, and the other political superstitions from which we suffer in Ireland.

In a country like this, where the agrarian interest predominates so abnormally, increased confusion concerning land becomes inevitable. As one of the agents of production, having to do with *all industries*, "land" means one thing, but in its agricultural function it means another thing, quite small in comparison, assuming the conditions normal, though apparently greater in Ireland, the basis being distorted; and, to make the facts fit the confusion, we always keep the fraction in front of the whole, always keeping the merely agrarian and proprietary interest of land above all its other economic and vastly more important interests. To perpetuate the perversion, an ignorant, agrarian majority dominates an intelligent, urban minority, made equally abnormal by the dominion, with the thought and the business of the towns silenced and paralysed by the clamour of the country, and this for little or no purpose beyond changing the ownership of the land from one set of incapable agrarians to another, without the smallest guarantee of any compensation to the people as a whole by a better use of the land. Even Davitt lived to realise the force of this. Why not recommend some capacity in the incapable agrarians, and make their occupation of the land conditional on their proper use of it? It is one of the adverse necessities of human progress that sections of a community must at times suffer for the common good, but when the suffering is incessantly borne, without a sign of the common good, then the infliction is no better than an organised crime against society, and I undertake to show that the whole business of our land problem, as presented and conducted, implies, of itself, no guarantee whatever to make the nation's land of more use to the nation, which is the only ground for a land problem.

In view of the confusion, and to emphasise the distinction between the greater function of land and the smaller, I have ventured the unusual plan of studying land under two separate heads. I have already dealt with its larger significance, and now, at much greater length, I have to deal with its agricultural and smaller interest. This must put my chapters out of balance, as an effort at economic exposition, but I am forced to follow the distorted conditions as the country presents them to me.

In England, even now, agriculture remains the greatest industry, while it is very small compared with all the other industries together, as it ought to be; and this natural proportion of things makes it easier for the English mind to give land its proper significance in the various economic functions, special and general; but in Ireland, where three-fourths of the population appear to depend on land directly or indirectly, where economic thought is practically unknown, and where feeling tends to preclude thought of any kind, it becomes almost inevitable to assume that the economic significance of land begins and ends in agriculture; and since assuming it so tends to make it so in fact, and to keep it so, the national mind is made an agent of national destruction, distorting life itself in the distortion of its means, to find relief in emigration, while land becomes more useless and more valueless. Land must always become more valueless by lessening the population and human effort on it (see Ricardo's "Law of Rent"); and the imposition of economic error on a people tends to perpetuate evil conditions to correspond, just as the adoption of a low code of morals must encourage a low level of conduct. When the landlords and the graziers took to substituting beasts for men, they little thought how, by their unnatural and blind selfishness, they were depressing the value of their own property, and otherwise paving the road to their own ruin.



That perverted view of land has already done incalculable harm to the Irish people, directing movements, shaping policies, dictating Acts of Parliament, and generally turning the energies of the nation into agencies of national destruction; and, though the results proclaim their causes more plainly on the face of the land than I can make them here, the fallacy is followed as devoutly as ever, in still-born statutes from year to year, each abortion necessitating the next. I know no other people who could wait twenty-five years for a plain folly to proclaim itself in a statute, and then elaborate farther follies to fit the first.

Few things are more depressing than to hear intelligent Irishmen, and even "educated" ones, talking of our "purely agricultural country," and assuming the description to be eternally unchangeable, whereas incessant change in shape, structure, means, and methods is an inseparable law and an inherent necessity to every social or economic system that has ever existed or that ever can exist. Assume me in mortal sin; must I, therefore, make this the permanent basis of my future conduct and the eternal condition of my life? There are mortal sins against economics as well as against the Decalogue, and I know that to "kill the soul spiritually" does not mean more to a Catholic than this "purely agricultural" sin against economics means to the Irish national life.

While the national mind is absorbed so completely in agrarian politics, the land itself becomes of less use and value to the nation, with the tillage and the people disappearing together, and the only industries that show real proofs of progress or revival are the non-agricultural, which the politician leaves comparatively alone. In short, Irish industry revives where the politician gives it a chance.

As an individual man who believes firmly that he cannot

do certain things is, by that very belief, made more incapable to do them, so in Ireland, the popular doctrine that land and agriculture are everything, discourages that initiative which is necessary to the growth of non-agricultural industries through the increased organisation of the agents of production in them; and this, in turn, reacts against agriculture itself, depriving it of that support which industries always derive from one another, however different in nature. Every growth in non-agricultural employment and productivity tends to increased demand and a better market for agricultural products, with corresponding advantage to agricultural employment. Regional fitness at various points within the industrial nation favours the production of one commodity here and another there; but, largely for this very reason, the nation of only one industry tends to become a nation of no industry, as Ireland has tended all the time. Though I know from practical experience that, in some of the most backward districts in Ireland, ordinary cropping, properly pursued, can be made actually more profitable than in England (and this really assisted by the backwardness); yet I know that a merely agricultural Ireland means a poor Ireland in the long run. It was the "merely agricultural" idea that put an end to the Boers as a nation

So far from being a discovery of mine, this great agrarian fallacy has a well-known history, manifested at various stupid periods in various countries. Even the thinkers of France were at one time dominated by it, and the French mind is said to have always shown a fine faculty for distinctions in this department of thought. In fact, it was the Frenchman, Quesnay, who, as founder of "the Physiocratic School," first gave the fallacy a scientific form. As the name suggests, it consisted in making the land the basis and measure of Wealth



and of Value, to the exclusion of labour and capital, which we know now to be vastly greater factors to the value of many commodities than land or any of its products. That was well over a century ago, but in time the French Physiocrats gave way to sense, as our Irish Physiocrats must do sooner or later, even though they have organised thoughtlessness into a "National Policy" for half a century. Quesnay's "school" has always interested me as marking a stage in the economic history of Europe, but it ought to have a still nearer interest for those leaders of the Irish mind who have now triumphantly arrived where the French defenders of the same fallacy were defeated in the eighteenth century. This loss of a century is the price we pay for muzzling those that dare to think among us.

As already shown, the encouragement of agriculture, to the exclusion of other industries, tends to defeat agriculture itself, forcing the agriculturist to sell his own products in a low market, and to buy the products of others in a high one. If there were nothing in it but the transit, it is heavily against Ireland at both ends, the nation having to pay unnecessary carriage (to foreigners) on what ought to be produced at home, and having to sell its own products so much less to meet the carriage of marketing the surplus abroad, not to mention the ruinous character of our peculiar transit system in itself. People with a superficial knowledge of John Bull's great foreign trade figures, in and out, commonly assume that the strictly internal economy is a small matter; but when we estimate John Bull's total productivity, and deduct his exports, we find that the vastly preponderating consumer of John Bull's products is John Bull himself, as it ought to be. Yet he is not satisfied. When John Bull is at his very best, he tries to convince himself that he is on wrong lines, as when Paddy is at his worst,

he is most intensely positive that he is incapable of going wrong. In this instructive contrast, the history of the two people is largely accounted for, and their respective characters largely indicated. At one side of the Irish Sea, we have hope in the impossible, lest the actual should advance ; at the other side, we have criticism of the actual, lest it give way to the impossible. Criticism, however, is not free in Ireland, and the better the critic, the greater the desire to silence him.

Farther, since people's pursuits in life help to shape their character, even to their ways of thought, it follows that confining a nation very largely to one pursuit tends to a predominant uniformity of mind in them, preventing that variety of temperament, talent, capacity, and standpoint which is at once an essential sign of social growth and an agent in the economy of social strength. Friendly friction is a healthier state of mind than dumb distrust. As a healthy and capable mind in the individual is indicated by reflex activities of perception and complex processes of idea, so a freedom and variety of mind, manner, vision, constitution and character is essential to the health of the social organism. You can never cramp faculty in limits narrower or cruder than its natural scope, except at the expense of character, which means at the expense of life, and this is precisely what happens through the over-preponderance of one pursuit among a people, not merely among the majority, in such pursuit, but also among the minority, outside, who generally tend to assume the mental vices of the majority.

Numerous writers on Ireland are now interested in our striking increase of lunacy, which is by no means accounted for by our increased statistical accuracy. The new Italian idea of associating it with genius and over-activity is equally inapplicable to our case; for we are by no means an over-active

people, and I am not aware that we suffer from excess of genius, unless it be that we have all our gifted ones already locked up as lunatics. It is not my business to look for all the causes of our increasing lunacy, but our agricultural exclusiveness is certainly one.

Students of the human mind will agree that faculty, unnaturally confined, or otherwise unsuitably environed, tends to madness, and who will tell me that our agricultural uniformity affords sufficient environment for faculties so varied and even so capricious in their variety as those of the Irish nation? Neither God nor Nature ever meant a people so many-sided to confine their faculties to a scope so one-sided. Agriculture appeals only to a side of the collective character, and its sameness to the uneducated, even at its best, becomes intolerable to people precisely in proportion as they are endowed with faculties for other fields; and at its worst, as we have it in Ireland, with a people gifted as highly by Nature as they are unsuitably environed by fact, it becomes impossible to avoid lunacy as a result. Every faculty implies an appetite, every starved appetite a misery, and every misery a means to madness. When our peasantry were more illiterate, they were more fit to bear it, because less fit to appreciate the unattainable alternative. There are few better ways to multiply misery than to develop faculty in circumstances that make its exercise and satisfaction impossible, and this has been the precise direction of our "education" for a century, turning our schoolmaster into a maker of lunatics at the expense of the State. The fever for flight corresponds accurately with this, and I am quite satisfied that many preserve their sanity by escape. Few things can be more maddening to a man than the consciousness of knowledge he cannot use, of faculty he cannot exercise,

of aspiration he can never hope to realise, and, with deference to the theologians, rather than wake a man in hell, without means to drag him out or to modify the climate, I would let him sleep.

Then, there is the shrewd old truth about having "all your eggs in one basket," and some of us at least know how our agricultural exclusiveness and our "doing as me father did," put half the nation at the mercy of an autumn fungus known as the potato blight. I have seen the minds of whole townlands temporarily unhinged by it,

## CHAPTER V.

### THE AGENTS OF PRODUCTION—LAND (*Continued*).

IT will now be seen that we have two Land Problems, a little one and a great one—the little one magnified beyond all measure, the great one almost wholly ignored, after the best manner of “the Irish mind ;” and lest the facts should have the smallest chance, “if you see a head that differs from you, hit it,” that it may raise no inconvenient argument against the agrarian dictation which sets the social organism upside down, and permits no reflective halt on the road to ruin. The more a man has in his head, the less he cares to have it broken, and so heads “come to the front” for their powers of resistance rather than for what I will courteously suppose them to contain. The forces organised against the landlord stand now against the nation. Thought and action, study and work, the forces alone vital and hopeful, are silenced and degraded for shouting, and the nation, in its agrarian fear of reason, behaves as a mere claue. Yet we always maintain a fighting attitude, especially in the matters that call for thought and not for fight.

The purpose is not to arrive at truth or to found conduct on it, but to defend a position, without a thought how far it be worth defending, as if the nation were a village debating society. One of the most fatally perplexing factors in all Irish problems is the mixture of hostility and histrionics imparted by the peculiarities of the national mind, and neither man nor nation can play with life in such a manner without suffering.

I would ask the student of our agrarian economics to think about this :—

As we have distorted the economic meaning of "Land" in the comprehensive conception, putting its minor or agricultural interest above its major or general interest, so also in agriculture by itself we have put the fraction in front of the whole, confining ourselves to a reduction of the rent and a question of ownership, while ignoring the twenty-fold value of properly working the soil.

Our little Land Problem, magnified, has to do with the tenure and ownership of the land ; our great Land Problem, ignored, has to do with its use and its productivity. I do not know any piece of economic study at present more worth the attention of Irishmen than the difference between this little Problem and this great one. The little one is almost wholly a question about one of the tenant's minor annual charges, while the great one is concerned with the whole scope of his interests, and with the whole operation of the Agents of Production in the greatest of our National industries.

We may take it broadly that our agricultural tenant, rightly directing his Labour and Capital on the land, can even now make over ten times as much by the use of his land as he pays in rent or purchase instalments, with practically indefinite possibilities of farther affecting the proportion in his own favour, according to his economy in method and his energy in pursuit of it. For a minor detail in the Distributive System, we lose sight of the whole Productive System, ignoring the potential shilling for a fight about the fraction of a penny.

The most myopic little Irishman, mastered by the little

Land Problem, has never claimed more than some "reduction" in the *twelfth penny*, with some change in the ownership, from which it does not necessarily follow that the nation's land must be of more benefit to the nation. Take a £10 a year holding, bought by the tenant at a purchase annuity that means a total reduction of 50 per cent. Here the tenant gains £5 a year. By proper management and working, this holding can produce in the gross at least £100 a year *for the labour now expended*. Which is the more worth considering? Over very large areas, the present productivity of such a holding is probably not £35 a year, and the easily-acquired balance of £65 a year is ignored in order to secure the £5 a year. Assume the annuity at an end (in seventy years), and the peasant's property an unencumbered freehold, the total gain is still only £10 a year. On the one hand, we have what can be done by a proper organisation of the Agents of Production in agriculture; on the other hand, we have a whole nation ignoring that great purpose for a £5 note, which, even then, is *not a national gain*. An enlightened neighbour of mine pays 37/- a year rent, and thinks that a "reduction" of 4/- in the £ would mean prosperity to him.

The fallacy does not end there. Assume the whole agricultural rental of Ireland turned out of the landlord's pocket and into the peasant's, it does not follow that the national wealth is increased by a penny. What happens is that:—

*A certain percentage* of the national wealth changes hands, from one class of Irishmen to another class of Irishmen. The transaction, *per se*, does not imply a farthing of increase in the total agricultural productivity, which is the one and only thing of permanent material value to the nation as a whole, in so far as the land is concerned.



If I buy a cow, are the cows of the country one more, or is mine a penny more valuable? Whether she produce a calf depends on how she is treated, not on how she is owned. She responds to her treatment in the most impartial manner, caring nothing whether owned by a beggar or by the Lord Lieutenant, and when she is bought or sold, her value remains quite unaltered in so far as the transaction is concerned, the only added gain being that of the mutual convenience to the man that gets her, and of him that gets the money for her. Suppose her the property of a family, as the land is of the national family, must one big bulley be allowed, by threatening and shouting, to drink all the milk and eat all the butter, and above all, must he be allowed, merely because he is the strongest, to limit her treatment and her yield to his own individual wants, degrading her capacity and the family for his own selfishness? Now, the land is the nation's milk cow, and everything I have said about the other cow, with more to like purpose, has but to be extended to its national application. Among all the fallacies for which we waste the nation, none is more destructive than that of mistaking the land-owner for "The People," whether the land-owner be the peasant or his predecessor in title.

It may be that, with the rent in the peasant's pocket, and not in the landlord's, a smaller amount of it may be turned into the wealth of some other country by absentees; but against this, the new owner may prove even as bad as the old one in the matter of properly capitalising and working the land; for the division of an industry's capital in many small items, among many poor and ignorant persons, is precisely the way to prevent the Agents of Production operating successfully together. A large landlord living on his estate, and turning back, say, half his rental every year to capitalise reproductive



labour on it under proper direction, might, in a few years, with safety and profit to himself, confer more benefit on the tenants than they are likely to derive from their own exclusive control of these things in a whole generation. The Irish landlord who gave a successful lead in this might do more for his country than all the Land Acts.

Then, I can see in this struggle for the £5 note a most discouraging element of another kind: the tenant is tempted to level his capacity down to his surroundings, instead of levelling his surroundings up to his capacity; he ignores the great problem of productivity for a mere trifle, and then tends to accommodate everything else to the arrangement, with many Acts of Parliament to encourage it. Suppose we took a chronic invalid as the standard of national manhood, and forced all other men to conform to that standard in life, food, work, etc. It would be called crazy, but it would not be more so than making the incapable or the unsuccessful husbandman the standard for the rest.

The more incapable or unsuccessful the tenant, the greater the reduction he gets, and more is thought of this than of the twenty-fold possibilities of the soil itself. I know tenants who, for years before the end of their judicial term, let out all their land impoverished and with a dike to every six feet in order to dry up the soil and stop the growth of the grass, as a basis for the next judicial rent. It may "pay" the peasant, or it may not, but it robs the nation, which rightly demands the utmost productivity in its land. The man of the dikes stands for a multitude, who deprive the nation every year of a great body of wealth that rightly belongs to it. This alone ought to show how the agrarian supremacy robs Ireland of her very life, but we have numerous other proofs as strong; it ought also to show how the Agents of Production, in their agricultural

function, are disorganised and degraded, with the assistance of statutes intended to produce the opposite effect. Yet these nation-killing arrangements are held superior to criticism, simply because the interest of the crowd supersedes the interest of the nation, with the nation contributing out of its poverty to organise the crowd for that purpose. For anyone who has thought much or thought honestly about these things, it is hard to have patience with the self-inflicted ruin in which the Irish nation dies ; but we must proceed calmly, and not sink to the vice of blind moaning which we undertake to condemn in others.

True, were the peasant the owner, without judicial leases, he need not make his dikes to rob his nation ; but he does *not* become the owner, and in the meantime must he go on destroying his race, deliberately scheming for his own inefficiency and convenience to keep locked up in the soil the means by which the fugitive might live at home ?

“Oh, wait till the Land Question is settled.” Ireland is always “waiting” for something, and should it come, then she waits for something else, going down all the time. For myself, I never wait one minute for any good thing I can do now, and I cannot recommend to my country a course I consider too foolish for myself. That, however, is another of our unrecognised problems. We speak only through our mobs, not frankly for ourselves, and the man in politics who says what he thinks, simply as if speaking privately, is by that very honesty of mind unfitted for politics, first because politics insists on the tyranny of organised expression only, and secondly because communities insist on being humbugged by their leaders, coquetting with the ideal to dissemble the fear of the actual. At bottom, it is a collective form of moral cowardice, and the perpetual pain self-inflicted by mankind

in this connection alone is one of the most depressing facts to be faced by the student of human society, especially in Ireland.

According to the most recent recipe. it takes about seventy years to make a peasant proprietor, and at least seventy more to *begin* making the last; one-hundred-and-forty years to “settle the Land Question,” quite time enough to remove all that remains of the Irish race in Ireland; and at the end there will still be many things to “wait” for, but who will there be to wait for them? “All things come to him that waits,” especially ruin, in circumstances like ours. The Irish leader who *knew* the structure and needs of his nation as well as he *feels* his own, would see that this nationality “while you wait” is like recommending unnecessary starvation on the ground that a good dinner may come from some unknown source on some day a month or two hence. The coffin may come before the dinner, and since that commodity has to be provided in any case, there is a saving, on the whole, but I am not sure that it is a sort of saving towards the national continuity. Let me have the dinner first, if only that I may earn the price of the coffin, and not have it borrowed.

One of the main causes, if not the greatest cause of all, is our Asiatic way of mind, which confines the national self-expression alone to “organisations,” making individual liberty in the matter of ideas a mere pretence, inflicted on ourselves by our own collective sanction even more than by any action of Government in modern times. As a matter of fact, when our continuous conflict with Government comes to be accurately analysed, it is found to work out largely by way of Government trying to secure liberty of expression and of life to the individual against the paralysing inflictions of our various and conflicting “organisations,” each mistaking itself for the nation. If any man has anything good to say, let him say it freely and frankly,

and let him as freely take that place in the community and in the "organisations" to which his ideas and his character entitle him. That, and that alone, is the way by which the higher character and the nobler thought of a nation can have their due influence on the national destiny, but it is a way made quite impracticable by our organised folly, and we all know this very well, from Shankill Road to New Tipperary. In one vital sense, there is no nation, because the mobs will not permit a nation, and the tyranny works nowhere more fatally than in disorganising the Agents of Production, without which no nation can live.

"Wait till the Land Question is settled." Suppose we do, and suppose some conceivable remnant of the race to survive after another century and a half, what then? The land has changed hands, from Smith to Robinson, without a sod for the Browns, the Joneses, or the rest, and without the smallest guarantee that the new owners, through being the owners, can make the land appreciably of more value to the nation as a whole.

With or without Peasant Proprietorship, the approved incidence of our tenure and use of the land is precisely such as to accommodate the incapability of the mere holders and to keep Ireland useless to the Irish. In another chapter I present one aspect of this fact, and here I want to show how the land is lost to the nation by the total absence of any provision against a monopoly of the soil by the incapable.

So long as the rent or purchase instalment is paid, a lunatic may hold the land. The member of the peasant's family who succeeds to the farm very often does so because he is the least capable, the others going abroad because the neglect of the Productive Problem in our agriculture has left them unable to see how they could make a living worthy of

their capacity at home. A father dies, the widow succeeds him, the children are yet young, and for the next generation the farm is degraded to a tenth of its practicable productivity, merely to accommodate the incapacity or misfortune of those who happen to hold it, at the nation's expense. A peasant loses his wife, his domestic economy is thrown out of joint, and the productivity of his land goes down. In Connemara I came across a place where a very old widower presented himself with a bride-elect, to the parish priest, who tried to reason with him against becoming another Omar Khayam, but he replied, "O sure, yer riverince, if I don't marry, I'll have to buy an ass." Some animal was wanted to work the "farm."

I could multiply illustrations indefinitely of how our land is held and used, not for its fullest productivity and the nation's good, but to accommodate all kinds of incapacity in the agrarian class, at the nation's expense; and I think I show conclusively elsewhere that all our so-called concessions to that class, whether by statutory reductions in rent or by tenant ownership, tend to accommodate, and even to encourage, the same incapacity rather than to realise the purpose, vital to the nation beyond all others, of turning out the utmost production from the soil. Neither landlord nor tenant has any real right to control a nation's land on any other terms.

Some years ago, struck with the force of these facts, and with the ruinous extent of their application, I made a personal examination into a number of average townlands in Connacht, to find only three per cent. of the tenants free from such destructive incapacity as I have indicated; and, even in the case of these, their good fortune was due to accident, and not to themselves, with their land still producing only to a third of its capacity, notwithstanding ample means to work it for its best. The sum of it is this, and I have nothing of more value

to say on the point :—Intelligent energy, with no more than the means at hand, applied to the treatment of the nation's soil, can at once get twenty times more out of the land than can ever be got merely by rent-fixing and shifting the ownership ; and, even assuming the whole programme at present in view to be finally realised, the nation and its agrarian dictators must still come back to my Productive basis before any substantial improvement can be made in our agriculture or in our country through its land.

The orthodox agitator, who has done me the honour to follow the argument so far, may now be thinking of harsh alternatives implied in its terms :—" Will you evict the widow, the widower, and all others who may not be able to make the most of the soil, and, if you evict them, what will you do with them ?" Well, to the nation, it would be cheaper to build a big house for them in each county, to provide for them in every way out of the land better than at present, to replace them by capable land workers, who could keep them in idleness for the rest of their lives, and have still a much better living left than is now made out of the land. I would rather undertake to provide for ten useless persons any day than let one useless person stand in the way of my providing for myself, as our incapable agrarians now stand between our land and our people. This, however, is business for the statesman, and not for a mere truth-seeker, and the fact that I look for cause and effect, and for nothing else, unfits me for Irish statesmanship, I could never shout loudly enough for the noise now dominating Ireland in the name of reason and patriotism, and besides, do I not dare to question the infallibility of the dominant agrarian, who has the votes ?

Economics is supposed to be a business too profoundly academic and theoretical for "the practical man," but let the most practical man of business in Ireland see what he can make of this question :—



“What must become of his own business if he made a rule of having it worked and controlled in total disregard of the fitness of those employed in it?” It would go to ruin, and so does Ireland, depending on her “purely agricultural” outlook, and conducting this in a manner I propose to our man of business. Why is no other business conducted in the same way? The trader or manufacturer who proceeded on the plan of our agrarians would have to shut his doors in a year.”

If the agricultural door is not yet completely shut in the same way, it is simply because the land cannot be destroyed like other kinds of property; because it is always there, always yielding something, even when totally unassisted. As a matter of fact, the whole fight is for that totally unassisted element, aiming at subsidised idleness, on “prairie value” rather than at the ten-fold value of enterprise in cultivation. Consider how the concrete facts correspond with this. Though I once thought otherwise, I do not now believe that there is one trace of pure patriotism or of industrial purpose in this fight for the land from beginning to end.

Were it a matter merely between landlord and tenant, it would not be worth all this writing, but it is a matter of enabling the Irish to live in Ireland, and too much cannot be written about this. Our landlords and tenants have made themselves a great national nuisance, mistaking themselves for the nation in a manner that could not be so arrogant were it not so thoughtless. Taken together, they are now joined simply in extorting from the nation a gigantic reward for their mutual incapability, while standing in the way of things incalculably more worth to the nation than all of them together, namely, the productivity of the land, and most important of all, the conversion of its products into farther and more desirable commodities to meet the demands of a civilised people.

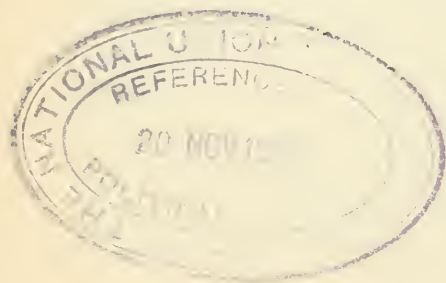
Observe how little either crowd thinks about the labourer, while his labour, reproductively capitalised on the land, is worth more to the nation than both crowds together. The presence of either a landlord or a farmer, *per se*, implies no certainty that the country is the better for his existence, but rather the contrary in too many cases, while the presence of the labourer is impossible except on the condition that he produces more than he costs, thereby leaving his country richer than he found it. The Irish nation has all this time been occupied in mere political speculation, while Work, Reproductive Work, the one thing fundamentally vital, hopeful, and healthy, remains out of the reckoning.

I will conclude this chapter by resuming its two main propositions—(1) The agricultural function of the land, in normal conditions, is a small consideration compared with its function as one of the Agents of Production in Industry all round. It is from land, in one aspect or another, that we derive all wealth *originally*; but, generally speaking, the original form of a commodity is comparatively valueless until further acted on and changed into other and more desirable forms by Labour and Capital. A cow's hide is bought for 10s., and that represents its value as an agricultural product; but converted into boots, its value may be nearer £10—the physiocratic fallacy again. Without land, the hide could not exist in the first instance, but see how small is its first-instance value compared with its final. Labour and Capital make the main difference. Then there are all the products of land apart from agriculture, such as minerals, and then comes the fact that no Productive progress of any kind can take place without that use of land for which we pay rent, in the city as well as on the field. When all such things are taken into account, the purely agricultural use of land recedes to its proper significance.



The nation of one industry is like a man trying to live on one article of food all his life, and the likeness applies the more fatally in Ireland, where that one dish is so badly done. The Archbishop of Tuam is reported to have said recently that the farmers in his diocese were the worst farmers in the world, and, without exaggerating, he could probably set them down as the worst among civilised peoples. However, in His Grace's diocese, the barefooted peasant children "study" Tennyson on Hallam, in the "National" Schools, with the assistance of Father Finlay as anthologist. (2) While the national attention is directed almost exclusively to support a fallacy concerning tenure, ownership and rent, these are a trifle compared with the problem of use, treatment and productivity, which, in the interest of the nation as a whole, demands the largest possible output from the land, and not merely the largest possible convenience to its owners or occupiers; and while the trifling problem proves extremely slow and extremely doubtful of solution, the great problem is solved the moment we set Labour and Capital to work on the land. I should like someone to tell me what conceivable good to Ireland can come from making a man the owner of his farm who aims at maintaining the smallest possible number of human beings on it in order to secure the greatest possible ease and convenience to himself and his beasts. In such a case, by no means uncommon, especially on the best soils, the nation is taxed to give the landlord a "bonus," to make the peasant a landlord, and to make the land of less use than it was before, and all this merely because two agrarian mobs, those who own the land and those who want to own it, have paralysed the public brain, and completely imposed their will on the nation, while neither mob thinks much about the nation's interest in getting the utmost productivity from the soil.

In Ireland's name, let us face these things, confess the fatal errors we have imposed on our people, and give what remain of our race a chance to live in their own land by the gifts and powers they take to build other nations. We who love Ireland so much, are her greatest enemies. She would not take her deadly doctrines from any but us. Why betray her so? That she has survived so much error, and tolerates so much still, is at once my greatest hope and my greatest despair in regard to her future.



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE AGENTS OF PRODUCTION—LAND (*Continued*).

ECONOMICS is usually treated in three divisions—Production, Distribution, and Consumption. So far, I am concerned with Production only, but here I have to anticipate, with a word about Distribution, because the nation's words are almost all about it. With the nation, it is always a wild struggle for a fraction of what is produced, without much thought about producing anything, while the time and energy spent struggling, might produce much. The Irish nation is like a family of ten, with only one working, and the other nine fighting for a fraction of what he produces.

The distributive basis ought to follow the productive, rewarding, strengthening and extending each of the agents of production in proportion to its value in the productive process, but even this axiom is ignored in the struggle. Since the whole agricultural rent, not to mention a reduction in it, does not amount to a tenth of the practicable productivity of the soil, the object of our perennial conflict in the distributive department sinks to insignificance before the productive problem, so fatally ignored. That, however, is but one of the many vital matters in which the national mind shows itself mastered by the fraction of a problem instead of mastering the whole. We have men who give their whole lives to what they call the national cause, and who never get the smallest notion of how a nation is constituted, how it grows, or how it dies ; and in all our public questions, national and local, there is always a fatal

tendency to fix attention on some one aspect of the matter, too often a trifling aspect, to the exclusion of the greater interests that could be seen by a more broad-minded and more comprehensive vision. Again, "The national mind in relation to the national destiny."

The agitator is not the worst nor the first in this perversion of the public mind which puts the little land problem above the great one. Until comparatively recent times, the Irish landowner, while contributing little or nothing to capitalise the land or to encourage labour on it, as they do in Great Britain, could evict the tenant practically at will, and appropriate the whole of his capital in improvements, selling these for a "fine" to the in-coming tenant. I have often seen it done even in my own time. For a long period in our industrial and agrarian history, this ruinous arrangement naturally prevented the productive organisation of land, labour and capital in a double way, first, through the landlord himself taking all he could from the land, and giving back nothing to capitalise labour on it for further production; and, secondly, through the permanent insecurity he imposed on any such investment of capital or employment of labour by the tenant. Declining to capitalise agricultural effort himself, and making it impossible, or at least very unsafe for the tenant to do so, he caused land, labour and capital to be fundamentally dissociated, instead of being productively organised for the benefit of all concerned. Economically and politically, the landlord of that day was father to the agitator of this day, so I will leave the contemporary representatives of both to conduct their ruinous quarrel among themselves. Even assuming ownership by working tenants to be a solution, which it is not, they fail to see that its establishment is quite impossible on any terms yet attempted.

In such circumstances, it was natural enough that the mere question of tenure should, for the time, take precedence of all other questions about land ; for, as we have seen, the peculiar economic evils attaching to that old tenure affected, even in a vital way, the larger problem of the use and productivity of the land itself : if the landlord made the application of capital to the soil impossible, how could labour be employed on it, or production encouraged on it ? Even at this hour, the effect of that old system has not been wholly removed, and I have only too much reason to know that the evil operation of it has even found its way into the present system to some extent. Let anyone who wants a striking example of this look at a piece of land in the occupation of Dr. Crean, near Ballyhaunis ; the poorer half of an original holding, now improved to more than twice its former productivity, while the other half, still occupied by a peasant, is as it was or worse. A few years ago, the statutory rent-fixers reduced the rent on the peasant, and raised it on the doctor on the other side of the fence. A tax, by Special Statute, is put on the capable tenant's hand, labour and capital, for the landlord's benefit, while a tax is put on the same landlord to compensate and encourage the incapacity of the other tenant. Through the unconscious medium of the landlord, this delightful Act of Parliament puts a tax on economic production to support and encourage economic degradation, as if it were the aim of Parliament to make the land useless, and to make the Irish emigrate. What interesting effects can be produced when a tyranny of words sets statute law to supersede economic law.

The old tenure absorbed the national attention so exclusively that people forgot the greater problem in its fraction, and such is the tenacity of Irish fallacies, as if articles of Faith, that now, more than twenty years after the old basis was

changed, and the tenant made a "dual owner," the "reduction in the rent" remains a greater consideration than the productive development of the farm, more than twenty times as valuable. One reason of it is that the nation never really understood even the little problem; for had they understood it, then, they must have seen it as a fraction of the greater problem, and they could not, as a sane people, have permitted the penny to stand in the way of the shilling, as they have done to this day.

Any extensive resumption of the normal process, by restoring the agents of production to their agricultural work, would have necessarily benefited the landowner, and the fact that he had never done much for the normal process himself, but had rather hindered it by extortion, made it very unlikely that hostile and unreflective leaders of the tenants could acquiesce in such benefit to him, even though their own followers were to benefit ten times as much as he. Hence the policy of "wiping out the landlord" first, at his most depressed value, that the tenant, as the new owner, might monopolise the greater advantage of the normal process when restored. Whatever it may mean to the tenant in the future, it has so far meant knocking him down for the sake of a much lighter blow at the landlord. I could give many proofs of this, but the continued flight of the peasants ought to be enough. If benefitted so very much, why do they go out of Ireland? What could have really benefitted them was the better and more productive use of the land, but that has been made impossible in the project of putting an end to the landlord.

The landlord, on his own part, made his destruction inevitable. How in sanity could a privileged class persist on the unnatural footing of sole allegiance to a hostile people, on means solely derived from their own? For a time, he thought

he might make the arrangement work very well, by removing the Irish from the better land, and by substituting beef for British consumption, with a rent artificially high on the tenanted areas, as a result of Protection, and with British bayonets at his back to secure the removal of his tenants from the good land, or the collection of their rackrents from the bad land, according as he chose to have it ; but meantime, a British Democracy rose to power, with their need for cheap food even stronger than their hatred of Ireland, which soon played out our landlord's game in Free Trade ; and when, later, the partial extension of that same Democratic process to Ireland resulted in electing peasants to the County Councils against the landlord himself, destroying his power even more completely than his purse, with the British themselves despising him now that he was no longer strong, and courting the support of his peasant destroyers, then, for the first time in his life, he discovered that Ireland had grievances, and he invented "Devolution"—too late. This is the natural end of an aristocracy that takes its purse from one country and its sympathies from another. The only thing unnatural in it is that it ought to have come sooner, which it must have done but for the delay of the Democratic Process in Ireland.

Meanwhile, among a people traditionally devoted to the idea of an upper class, there was no need for the ruin of the landlord, had he remained Irish in sympathy and in service, as well as in the sources of his income. To do them justice, the peasantry never grudged the rackrent as much as they despised the political apostacy of the rackrenter. Mr. Standish O'Grady tells me a true story in point, about Mr. Barton, who had an estate in the Midlands when the Land League reached its terrible power. On this estate, the owner had for years employed a large number of labourers on reproductive



work under his own direction, and when his tenants put him under the No-Rent Manifesto, he called his labourers together, saying to them :—"You and I have got along comfortably together, and it was my hope that we should so continue, but you will easily see that if I cannot get rent, I have not money to pay wages, and I am forced against my will to tell you that all your employment must stop at the end of this week." The work they did ought to pay their wages, apart from the rent, but they spent that night interviewing the tenants, and in a very short time the rent was paid, and the work resumed, showing how, if only the landlords did their duty as Irish citizens, they could have stood secure even against the power of the Land League.

To the Economist, with his eye on the nation, it matters comparatively little who owns the soil, but its productive use matters everything, and such a transition in ownership is a piece of class warfare and a struggle for privilege rather than a matter of primary economic significance to the nation. At its best, the theory is open to these objections, among others :— It tends to destroy a class, and our classes are already too few, because our economic basis is insufficient to create or to support that volume and variety in the social structure which grow on a normal and progressive basis. The greater the nation, the more variety in its constituent parts, and classes are a sign of social strength so long as their distinctions are founded on character, which they ought always to be. It does not follow that a change in the ownership of the soil from one set of owners to another, must of itself make the land of more use to the nation as a whole, and this is the fundamental aim to be always kept in view ; and the prospect is not at all improved when the change is from our richest and most educated class to our poorest and most uneducated. The first

thing of all is to get labour and capital organised on the land, and it does not follow that this can best be brought about by those who have little capital, less capacity to create it, and still less to get labour reproductively employed by it. The peasant's aim is to do all his own work, or, when he has more land, to sublet it at rack-rents for meadow or grazing, and put his hands in his pockets. He will do anything rather than permanently establish the labourer on it, and in this connection he is worse than the landlord ever was, because the landlord, by the nature of his position, and by the conditions of his life, was practically forced to employ the labourer, while the tenant proprietor's way of mind is to leave the work undone rather than take the intelligent trouble that would make the labourer profitable to him.

A common view of the Irish agricultural labourer requires him to be in good working "form" for three or four months in the year, then, let him hibernate or become a pauper until he is wanted next year; and the employers who are best situated to alter this and to make wages reproductive all the year round, simply by intelligent direction, are the very men who grumble most when the pauperised victim of their incapacity is not always on the spot at their bidding. Meantime, we may take it as an unalterable certainty that until the labourer appears on the soil, permanently and reproductively, the real land problem remains unsolved, because his presence is the final and essential proof that the Agents of Production are operating normally, as his absence proves now that they are not. I question seriously whether our tenant proprietors, taken as a whole up to date, have not diminished their wage bills and extended their grass *at an increased rate* since they became proprietors, especially on the richer soils, where indolence is most practicable, thereby actually making the greater natural

wealth of the nation a means to its more rapid destruction, with the assistance of State credit. This is certainly the general fact that rewards my personal inquiries on the richer soils, and it is a fact of deeper moment to the Irish nation than anything yet arrived at by our agrarian controversy. Sir Horace Plunkett's official statisticians could hardly be better employed than in ascertaining whether the result of my own inquiries is not the result on the whole. If this cannot be ascertained now, it will surely be ascertained some time, and then our agrarian dictators may begin to know where they are—when they shall have imposed another decade or two of national destruction upon us. The whole cry of "The Land for the People," reduced to its value in cold fact, means "The Land for the Politicians," who never can be the people unless while the nation dies. No nation can permanently found its life on a single industry, which is rather founding its death, and the certainty of it was never more imperative than in the economic conditions of our own times, in which permanent social security demands more and more variety in the industrial basis of life, in accordance with the more varied and more extended needs of advancing civilisation. No people can permanently depend on other people to supply their general needs without going out of existence in the same proportion, and the Irish tendency is to civilise a few privileged persons quite highly on grass, letting the rude majority go to make greater nations out of Ireland.

Our Economic outlook is to pay other peoples for our commodities in general with grass and beef, providing emigrant ships for our own people, who do not own the grass or the beef, and who ought to be employed producing what we import. Peasant proprietorship, *in our conditions*, offers us nothing whatever to alter this.

At most, it is a diffusion of landlordism, not by any means in its best sense, and should our economic insanity ever permit our industry to grow in its full and varied meaning, agricultural and otherwise, the peasant owner may prove a greedier dog-in-the-manger to tax industry for privilege than the larger landlords have ever been. Men's differences in motive and standpoint in these matters arise mainly from their class interests; inherently; they are the same, and the peasant, turned landlord, must come to feel and think as a landlord towards the landless multitude that make the nation more than he. We have now an opportunity to avert generations of tyranny for Irishmen of the future in this connection. Assuming "The Land for the People" an accomplished reality, and not a catch-cry fallacy, it does not follow that Ireland becomes of more use to the Irish. In England, the lands collectively owned and administered, whether Crown property or Municipal, are worse managed, and produce poorer results to the nation than others. Less talk about Irish land may mean more and better work on it, and here alone can I see a prospect of substantial advantage from the transition—an advantage already practicable, without the assistance of a single statute, and requiring character in the people rather than wisdom in the Government.

Let us never lose sight of the truth that the arrangement which makes its land of most use and value to a nation is that which most conduces to the reproductive employment of labour and capital in it, on it, and on its products, for all kinds of productive purposes, agricultural and otherwise. I question whether a syndicate of New York Jews, owning all the land in Ireland, and properly capitalising Irish labour on it for their own gain, might not make it of more use to the Irish people than any scheme yet invented by Irish agitation or British benevolence.

The ideal ownership of a nation's land is ownership by the nation, but unfortunately, in a world like this, the ideal and the practicable are in ceaseless conflict in most things, and it does not even follow that the ideal is the best, the attempt to realise it often making more mischief than the drawbacks in the alternative. Economically, at least, the best system is that which makes the land most productive to the nation; that which most conduces to the free and reproductive organisation of land, labour, and capital in all other productive pursuits as well as the agricultural; and it happens, in fact, that competitive self-interest, under due restraints, gets nearer to this end than any idealism of ownership yet attempted anywhere.

Though this superiority of the practicable over the ideal in the matter of land ownership has not, so far as I know, been explained by any of the economists, its explanation seems to me both brief and simple. Most of us know, or ought to know, that the individual can make more of his life and means by pursuing a course in conformity with his faculties than by wasting these on a purpose beyond his level. This is the fact with the nation also, and no nation has yet evolved the ethical refinements required to go with collective land-ownership, which involves a conception of justice as far beyond the level of the highest nation as the greatest of the prophets is beyond me. In morals, the struggle after what we have not the capacity to accomplish may have its value, but in economics, it may sacrifice the practicable to the impossible, perhaps even extending our distance from the ideal in view. In economics, what *can* be done is the true basis of what *may* be done, and transitions that work to happiness when gradually accomplished, might rather reach chaos by short cuts.

It will be noticed that the value of my argument in these agrarian chapters, depends largely on the assertion that the

productivity of the farm can readily be made ten times the rent, with a further margin of gain to further improved method. If this assertion be true, it follows that agricultural Ireland has lost itself in the fraction of the tenth, namely, a reduction in the rent and a question of ownership, while the twenty-fold gain has been neglected. Given this, decay and emigration become obvious, instead of remaining a puzzle. Could anything be of more importance to Ireland than to determine the substantial truth of this matter?

For four years, I have myself controlled a typical tillage farm. In that time, I have multiplied its productivity by more than three, while rather diminishing the total cost of production, and making it easier, pleasanter and more profitable for those employed. This year (1906), the gross value of the season's products is fully fifteen times the rent and taxes together. All this results merely from economising effort by improved methods ; in other words, it results from organising labour and capital on the land in accordance with the time, the needs, the means and the opportunities of the situation, not depending on any special or original efficiency in any form, but rather on the ease of excelling the ruinous, labour-wasting and life-destroying *regime* around me. The additional capital required for this three-fold gain on a given expenditure of labour is well within the means of my neighbours, but they are ready to lose it in showing that they are rich rather than use it to become less poor. The return on my additional capital is very large, the security perfect so long as I attend to it. Thus I have something more than mere theory for the conclusions I present.

During two winters, as editor of the *Irish Peasant*, I have published from week to week authenticated records of profitable tillage, with names and addresses, showing 20 to 200 per



cent. net return all round on the capital invested in crops, which is more than twice the average return on industrial capital generally in these islands, and this mainly in the County of Meath, where for generations the people, or those of them surviving their grassy superstitions, had accepted it as if an article of faith that "Tillage did not pay," while their very rich areas went more and more to grass, and the beast of the stranger roamed in solitude on the sites of their departed palaces and among the graves of their forgotten kings. In verifying my facts, I was entitled to speak only of farmers who knew their work, and I confined myself to these, denying the claim of the incompetent as a standard, and proceeding on the ground that agriculture, even in Ireland, could be as profitable as other industries, if as well conducted ; but instead of approving and profiting by my hopeful revelation, as would happen anywhere in economic sanity, the incompetent agrarians, always dominant in Ireland, and always numerous enough to discredit capacity by "organisation," resented my efforts, came down to me drunk, with sticks, and ordered me, under pain of quick destruction, to cease my crime of showing how the Irish people could live and prosper in Ireland. I continued my crime, and live still, but I will never be forgiven the deadly sin of having even remotely endangered that "reduction" on the penny, in my desire to see the nation get its reasonable shilling out of the land. On our rich areas, even more than elsewhere, the land that ought to be supporting the nation is held rather to secure the industrial incapability of the occupants, with £100,000,000 of State credit to make that incapability the more secure in fee simple, and to evade the economic necessity for improving on it, which tends to keep the social character as low as its economic efficiency, with a premium on stupidity, and intelligence at a discount ; and, lest this *regime*



of systematic ruin, authorised by statute, and financed by the State, should be inconvenienced by contact with ideas or exposed to the light of economic research, the incompetents keep their stupidity organised into a dominion under which editors of newspapers, ministers of religion, and even their own leaders have to accept a process of social and economic degradation as a triumphant definition of national wisdom. There is nothing quite like it elsewhere in the world.

Last summer I saw a "farmer" with a spade and shovel spend twenty-two hard days' work for what he could have done with one horse in a day and a half; and while thus occupied, he had a number of horses on the grass idle, some of a kind that must lose in themselves every day they were kept, apart from the value of their food thrown away. One of these destructive animals, converted into suitable implements, might have enabled another of them to do all this work, and saved three weeks of the owner's time in this process alone, not to mention similiar economies in many other connections. He has cattle worth £6 a-head at three years of age, and I, on the other side of the fence, on poorer land, have them worth £7 a-head at a year, and £14 at two years, and it is obvious that no matter how successfully he may have starved them, they must have eaten more in three years than mine could eat in one, not to mention that he waits and works three times as long for his returns. Having secured "prairie value" from the landlord for himself, he puts his heifers also on prairie value, so that the landlord's loss results merely in securing and perpetuating the tenant's inability, with production and the use of the land to the nation as it was before or worse. "Something in the pound" comes out of the pocket of one incapable agrarian, and goes into the pocket of another, but the calf takes three years to be worth £6, and our

statesmen call it "the solution of the Land Problem." It would be more accurate to call it a game of hurting somebody to help nobody. This is typical of wide regions through county after county, and where means, energy, time, land, labour and capital are thrown away so ruinously, how can a country escape destruction?

For twenty years, like his neighbours, my friend has spent much time agitating, and in any two of these years, by the improved methods within his means, he could have made more out of his farm than the total of his reductions. By all means, let him have his land for nothing if he can, but why teach him that the twenty-fold gain is "impossible" pending the abolition of the landlord? Meantime, the landlord declines to be abolished, and the effect is to keep our greatest national industry, our only extensive one, in a really barbarous condition, destroying the very means by which our fugitives could be kept at home. If I may for once indulge a merely personal opinion, I think the Irish landlord deserves nothing better than abolition, but one cannot sanely advocate the destruction of what implies his own destruction also. In other words, I would not destroy a hundred peasant in order to destroy one landlord.

For two years before I started "Economics for Irishmen," I had spent most of my leisure in Ireland, examining the data of our agrarian economics, not merely in the study, from statistics and arguments, but mainly in the open field, face to face with the concrete facts, and in personal touch with those responsible for making the soil useful to the nation and to themselves; and nothing has impressed me more than the total absence of any proof that peasant proprietorship, *per se*, however fully or promptly accomplished, can promise an early or substantial increase in the productivity of the land or in the footing for the labourer

on it. When, in personal contact with the peasantry, I analyse their motive in proprietorship, I find that, instead of tending to advance productivity, it rather tends to accommodate indolence, especially on the richer soils; for that motive is neither more nor less than the desire to appropriate the *natural* potentiality in the soil which enables the owner of it, unlike the owner of any other kind of commodity, to pocket an "unearned increment," independently of any effort at any time, and apart from the productive process. The man who owns land owns Nature herself, and, which is more important, he owns precisely that part of Nature most essential to human life, which necessarily gives him a lien on lives of the public, and a security for his own life more permanent than any other conceivable; and in this position, assuming his area sufficient, he is secure of a living from the mere "prairie value," totally unassisted, and he is free to choose between beasts and men as the occupants of the land. Conceivably, one man might own a whole country, stock it exclusively with beasts, and shift a whole nation out of it. Indeed, this is precisely the tendency that has grown in Ireland for fifty years.

What the peasant desires, then, above all things else, is precisely that privilege which he rightly calls tyranny when enjoyed by his landlord. By intuition and exposition, the peasant has learnt merely to covet a privileged power, without guarantees that it shall be used better for the nation than by its last possessor, and in so far as I have been able to examine the actual facts, our tenant proprietor already exercises his privilege against the labourer and the nation as blindly and as tyrannically as the landlord ever exercised it against himself, but with results still more fatal, since the labourer is more essential than either the landlord or the tenant to the purpose of making the land of the utmost use to the nation. The cessation of strife

must mean better opportunities, with any form of occupation, but the motive in the change of owners is not increased productivity; it aims rather at creating a vested interest in the soil for uselessness, at the expense of the State, and must tend to that result unless checked and conditioned by some such influences as may make the presence of the labourer a possibility—a result which can never be produced solely by Statutes. It is singularly characteristic of our statesmanship that while the real standard of agrarian progress is the presence of the labourer, his existence has been ignored by all our statutes and policies so far. Could anything more clearly show that the predominant purpose is to “grab” Nature, and not to advance life?

If my argument be true of our tenanted land, it is doubly true of the prairies, which, under beasts, give the nation a net reward of about £2 an acre, while the same lands, under proper cultivation, would give at least five times as much; and meantime, to prove that it is not from want of capital, we have the astonishing fact that *the grass acre requires more to capitalise it than the tilled acre*. We want character, not capital. Indeed, where capital is most abundant, tillage is most scarce, and the land most valueless to the nation. The more an Irishman has means to till, the less he tills. I travel from the congested and excessively tilled bogs and crags, and on approaching the town, from which the capital is sent abroad for three per cent., I find the rich land around untilled, while its affluent occupiers might make twenty per cent. at their doors on their investment by tilling it. It looks as if the Irish nation had engaged on an elaborate conspiracy deliberately to destroy its own life.

There is a rather large proportion of our tenantry outside the scope of my argument, because situated on scraps that make a progressively economic existence quite impossible.

These constitute a special problem in themselves, and this is its solution:—Their natural inheritance is the cattle ranch, from which their ancestors were shifted for British convenience. Their case is peculiarly and entirely a British responsibility, and ought not to cost one shilling to anybody in Ireland. Entirely to suit herself, Great Britain created this permanent evil in Ireland; let Great Britain remove it, and apologise for not having done so sooner. In this matter, the British have imposed a permanent degradation on us, and then deliberately blamed us for it through centuries, a historical proceeding as mean as their modern behaviour is meant to look magnanimous. Some of us blame the British for everything, and ourselves for nothing; others completely reverse the charge, and no one attempts a broad-minded adjustment of the responsibility. In any case, we must blame ourselves for what we can do *now*, and fail to do, and this goes a very long way.

This chapter concludes what I have to say about land, for the present. A real solution of the Land Question is implied in it, but instead of entering upon ways and means, I will leave the reader to his inferences and the statesman to his expedients. It is for me to demonstrate causes rather than to dictate cures, and I trust I observe that principle. The reader who cannot form conclusions of his own from the material I present to him, has small need to follow these chapters in any case.

Only in the Conjested Districts can I find any new impetus to industry through the "vesting order," that is, where the farm does not afford a living for a family in any circumstances, and the gain here will probably not compensate the increased indolence on the richer farms since the charm of fee simple was attached to them. Take a typical case in Meath. The tenant paid £2 an acre, and declared his landlord a tyrant. Then he became landlord himself, on a purchase

annuity of 27/-, but he employed less labour than ever, tilled absolutely nothing, and sub-let more than before. In 1905 he got as much as £12 an acre for conacre. As a tax on the labourer, £2 an acre is tyranny, but £12 an acre is—patriotism ! In Meath, the man on ten acres wants to live as a grazier, and that is what we get by “The Land for the People” where the soil is best, and ought to be of most use to the nation.



## CHAPTER VII.

### THE AGENTS OF PRODUCTION.—LABOUR.

WE have seen how Production and its agents are disabled in connection with land; let us now consider Labour's share in the same evil. The dominant agrarian, whether peasant or patrician, will not complain of want of candour in our treatment of him, and our account of the labourer must be as faithful to the facts.

Only a few hours' journey, from Connacht to Lancashire, and at one end the Irishman has a reputation as one of the worst workers in the world, while at the other end he cannot find his superior, as if he changed his character on the way across—and seriously, I question whether it is not more a fact than a figure. We have a gift for changing our character, like most peoples so long subject to the insanity of imitating their inferiors.

Of course, the end of the journey at which the Irish worker wins his bad reputation is at home—always giving the worst of himself to Ireland, and the best to “the inimy,” while shouting his readiness to “die for the ould sod.” We are ever ready to “die” for Ireland, but never to live for her. To the minds of most, there is a sort of indignity in home employment, not merely on account of wages, but also because the labourer, following a very natural impulse, prefers to measure himself on the highest standard available, the want of which in Ireland drives the best workers elsewhere, largely through the fault of



the home employer and the capitalist ; and accordingly over large Irish areas there is a subtle assumption that young manhood must lack the hall-mark of efficient maturity until it has proved itself in England, Scotland, or America, with the necessary acquisition of blasphemous obscenity to match. Yet, those whose special duty it is to correct this side of the worker's character take little notice of the need to get home employment for him. So does "holy Ireland" turn wholly foreign and unwholesome, even in the shadow of the shrines of the saints. Our priests know this painful perversion better than I can tell them ; yet we cannot get them to grapple with the Productive problem, which alone affords relief. They seem to assume that it is enough to make us "good, dutiful boys and girls," and successive generations of the hideously opposite result in ruined emigrants and a ruined nation are not enough to open their eyes, except in the case of a gifted pastor here and there. Should anyone think I blame too strongly, or speak too carelessly, let him compare the results with my definition of the causes. A good workman is necessarily a man of character, and I assert that the Catholic Faith would help to give him that character if properly presented to him.

Before going further into cause and effect, let me try to present Irish labour as I see it, with those features of its inefficiency for which the labourer himself is responsible. I know a farm labourer who lives on some land of his own, about half a mile from where he earns his wages. In winter, of course, he cannot finish before night, and then, for fear of ghosts, he cannot go home without an escort. His sons come for him every night. The sons are men, also afraid of ghosts, and must leave their work at home before dark to fetch the father, and should one of them fail to do this, two of them must turn out together after sunset, all for the father's eighteen pence a

day. I have no personal acquaintance with the ghosts of that neighbourhood, beyond the fact that they diminish the annual income of that and of other families, preventing their work, and disorganising the Agents of Production in the same proportion, as if Parliament and the politicians were not enough mischief, without the assistance of ghosts. After I have done with the Agents of Production, I may treat the agents of destruction, and if I do, ghosts must take a front place. My masters in political economy have lost sight of subject-matter for two whole chapters, "The Economic Influence of the Fairies," and "Ghosts in Production;" but we must remember that they never had to write "Economics for Irishmen," and that "the inductive method" is new in the science.

My ghost-ridden family are not alone. Almost the whole of their neighbours are similarly hindered to some extent in the business of life by ghosts. Last winter I found easy work for one of them, and it would more than pay his year's rent, but he refused it, because it would sometimes take him out at night among the ghosts; and when he refused it, he was actually under notice of eviction by the landlord for non-payment of rent, and could not raise the money to settle. He has not settled yet, with the result that his title to the land is in doubt, his labour on it discouraged, and all this because the ghosts would not let him earn the money that would settle with the landlord. When I regretted the error of my masters in not having written the two supernatural chapters above mentioned, the critical reader may have thought I was joking, but I hope he sees now how really serious the matter is.

Will it be suggested that this peculiarity of our "Spiritual people," is confined to my district? It is everywhere I have gone and inquired in the country. It impedes the life of people in general as well as that of the peasant. I know even

policemen who are seriously hindered in their duties by the fear of ghosts. Bearded men behave as children, and "the body politic" is like a nursery governed by the fairy tales of an old woman. Now, if the duties of life and the means of progress be impeded in this widespread way by ghosts, what must be the effect on the character all round, and on the condition of the community through the character?

Before taking leave of the ghosts as political economists, I may be permitted to remark that while they stand on the road to industrial revival in this way, it is no wonder if the labourer allows his efficiency to be impaired by agencies more concrete and more tangible. The labourer, like the capitalist, and the land-controller, must remember that the Agents of Production attract each other in proportion to their efficiency, and repel each other in proportion as they are impaired; and where labour is so largely directed by ghosts and politicians, its attractions for the capitalist can hardly help being small. As a capitalist, I should not care to invest my money under the control of ghosts, unless in a theatre or some such place, where Hamlet's father is always good for his bread and cheese, instead of taking the bread out of people's mouths, as the ghosts do in Ireland. I should like to write more about the Irish ghost in economics, but, as I have explained, the subject is one for a whole essay to itself.

We had better consider the Irish labourer under two heads, the Agrarian and the Miscellaneous, and in the agrarian connection, I see at once another powerful impediment to efficiency which has probably never been estimated. On more than half the holdings of Ireland, the labourer is the tenant, and his own master, in a position to "do as he likes," at least until such time as the Sheriff's bailiff comes. When every man can "do as he likes," or thinks he can, then,

"what he likes" becomes a matter of deep but unrecognised importance, to the nation as well as to himself. In such a case, the motive of *necessity* is put aside for that of *mere will*, and it does not require much reflection to see that the will must be of a high order, indeed, before it is fit to supersede necessity in determining the industrial effort and conduct of a people. I do not know on the face of this earth a body of industrial workers of any kind, manual or mental, in whom the will is so finely conditional as to make it a sufficient substitute for necessity. What, then, must be the case with a body of agricultural labourers of whom a great majority were illiterate until recently, and of whom a great minority are illiterate still?

They "do as they like," and what they like is to waste their time and energy for a third of the year, not to mention the larger waste from want of knowledge and of method in the energy actually expended and applied during the other two-thirds of the year. That is the economic result of the peculiarly Irish attempt to evade necessity, and to substitute a crudely conditioned will in the Process of Production. It cannot but reduce the efficiency of labour, and do double damage to it in other ways, first, by reducing its own direct reward, and secondly, by discouraging capital to employ it; and in addition, it has a bad moral effect, discouraging regularity of effort and of habit, and wasting life and means in trying to maintain conditions that are ultimately impossible, because in antagonism to the conditions that are ultimately inevitable. In the long run, there is no evading economic necessity as the primary law of work, unless in the case of genius. The attempt to evade it indicates, and begets, moral weakness. It is neither more nor less at bottom than a collective attempt to "dodge" a collective duty and an inevitable responsibility. The primary cause is partly our unconscious

nearness to communism, which did not give way to the individualistic system in industrial production in Ireland until long after the change had come about in most other parts of Europe. As a matter of fact, among the people with whom I am dealing, I find concrete survivals of communism in their industrial conditions and methods to this day, and generally speaking, where these survivals persist, the other industrial vices are most abundant and most destructive. Communism has been well defined as "taking according to your needs, and producing according to your capacity," with the taking and the producing in common. It persisted with our tribal chieftanship, and left marks not easily removed.

The communistic influence surviving in Irish industry, however, is a much larger subject than I can treat fully just here, and I will mention only an instance or two showing how production is hindered and life wasted. At Loghurragh, near Swinford, I counted as many as thirty-five different "farms" on the side of a hill, and one of the "farmers" told me I might count as many on the other side. I saw some "stripes" that were only two ridges wide, that is, wide enough for eight rows of potato plants, and he told me some were only one ridge wide. The whole area is only seven Irish acres, divided into more than fifty holdings, between eleven tenants, my guide said. That would leave between four and five different "farms" to each of the eleven tenants within the seven acres. Of course, the plots are not fenced, which means that no plot can ever be grazed unless with a watcher to protect the adjoining crops. Some of the plots have not been seen lea within living memory, and this year there are fine crops of—charlock. Nothing on wheels can go among these "farms," and all the carrying has to be done on donkeys' backs, with a man following the donkey when he ought to be doing some-

thing more like a man's work. Such is the modern evolution from tribal or communistic tenure ; but the case is worse with Paudheen Ua Conneilla, of Derrynea, Connemara, who showed me his trifle of tillage in seventeen patches, one "field" being three yards wide and four yards long. Like the people of Loghurragh, he digged away, not realising that he competed with steam and motor ploughs in America. The Congested Districts Board are grappling bravely with such plague spots, though under the greatest discouragements, and not always taking the worst spot first. If a priest is likely to raise an agitation, the Board is coerced into petting his parish and neglecting worse places, which, as well as being unfair to the Board, is unfair to the other priests, the religious ones, who attend to their sacred work instead of politics, and who have their parishes neglected by the Board in consequence. In these places there is a sort of contempt for the man who despises to threaten, the people having known authority only in some form of tyranny.

On a fine working day last winter, I walked fourteen statute miles in a Congested District in Mayo, from Swinford to Ballyhaunis, to observe the better at my walking pace how they might happen to be occupied for the day, and in the whole journey I saw "at work" only one man, who had his hands in his pockets, and his shoulders humped against the wind. He was looking among his sheep, and so I call it work, he being an Irish farmer. The fences were down which ought to keep the cattle next summer, and so let the children to school, but the Compulsory Clause of the Education Act was not in force ; the local politicians were afraid to enforce it, and the parents were free to bring up their families like themselves, with their hands in their pockets and their humps against the wind. I saw not one



acre yet ploughed, and the winter weeds were strengthening their hold on next year's potato fields, making double work for the coming June, when there would be no time to do it. On that day, in that region, the Government had bodies of men at work on improvements to farms under the Congested Districts Board, paying the people wages out of the taxes to do their own work. The Congested Districts Board acts as Communal Chieftan to the clan, and on the whole, they never had a chieftan as good, but individual initiative is out of the question, and in these winter months the families are moaning in preparation to emigrate their younger and stronger members, while the profitable work that would enable them to live well at home remains undone at their doors. Even when they work, their return for it is poor, because they do not know how it ought to be done or made profitable. The service of the Congested Districts Board to the country could be greatly increased if its officials, who are usually thorough workers, could be relieved from the tyranny of the parish mobsman. In the same region, last Spring, I found that 300 tons of artificial manures had been delivered in recent weeks at one railway station, all under 25 per cent. pure, while they could have it 45 per cent. pure for a proportionately less price, saving freight at 14s. 10d. a ton on nearly half of the whole quantity, not to mention other advantages. It was practically the same as carrying 150 tons of cobbles from Dublin Bay, and the farther from the seat of production, the more is the "cheap" stuff preferred, with railway rates higher than anywhere else I know. The shopkeepers, I am told, have more profit on the bad stuff than on the good stuff, and even the priest can hardly tell the people what may displease the shop-keepers.

Now, suppose all these little farms turned into half the number, each twice the size, with half the number of tenants,



and the others turned into labourers for these ; in that case, we have at once got rid of the will as the immediate motive for effort, and substituted necessity, in accordance with finally inevitable conditions ; there is necessity for half the workers to satisfy the other half in work done, and there is necessity for the employing half to see that they get value for the wages, not to mention increased inducements to regular and efficient effort on both sides. Once a man has begun to *pay* for work, it immediately assumes a new, a more instructive and a more serious interest for him, if not a more pleasant interest, as it must also to the man employed, and now no longer free to “do as he likes,” namely, nothing. Under this arrangement, the same area of our country could obviously yield a great increase, and support a greatly increased population, with inducements to employ more and more labour as fast as the employer found it to his advantage.

The moment a man passes above the stage of being his own employer only, and begins to employ others, that moment requires in him a new character and an exercise of additional intelligence, which is of very high significance, socially as well as economically ; and the new position is quite dependent on the application of the new character, because unless the additional intelligence is put to work, the wages paid will not be reproduced, and the employer must fall back again to his original position, “doing as he likes,” but losing to the community that higher character and capacity which grow and reproduce themselves by the successful employment of workers. It is not merely a loss in the total wealth produced ; it is a farther loss, and in some respects a greater loss, in the neglect of those faculties which control wealth production by wages, and which are so much higher than those required to work for one’s self. Thus an industry in which each man is his own

employer is likely to produce a lower standard of intelligence and character in the people, and, in the broad application of the terms, than one in which the best brains are specialised and employed to direct the productive energies of the mass. For example, the industrial efficiency of the French peasant proprietor is quite remarkable, and yet not more remarkable than the backwardness of his higher faculties as a social unit, considering the prominent place of his country in the educational and economic world. Working "for himself," and having no need to bring out in himself the faculties to control employed labour, he falls short of his otherwise due share in the civilisation of his time and country; and in the same proportion the mental sameness of his class must necessarily be a hindrance to the genius they might otherwise develop for the higher pursuits of life. In modern times the character of the Danish peasants appears to have developed much more rapidly, and in Denmark we find a greater tendency to the practice of paid labour in agricultural pursuits. Not one of us can ever quite rid himself from the mental and moral influences of his occupation, and it is not reasonable to expect as much character developed in people that live by an industry whose conditions do not require it. In Ireland the aim of too many farmers is to be rid of the labourer altogether as soon as possible, making the ability to control his work no longer necessary, and so lowering the character of the farmer himself, as well as degrading the soil and the community that belong to it.

There are few more demoralising notions abroad in the world than this of "doing as you like." It is beyond the possibility of Emperors, and His Imperial Majesty, Hodge, cannot indulge it without unfitting himself and his country to survive anywhere in modern conditions, as Ireland has been

unfitted to survive for so long. Its moral effects are as bad as its economic. It acts against the sense of discipline and the sense of responsibility. It tends to encourage false ideas of liberty; therefore, of justice and of conduct also: where every man attempts to "do as he likes," no man can do as he likes for long, even in such concerns as may demand and justify it. Short of a community of perfect men, otherwise gods, there is no liberty without limiting it, and an increasingly ethical world will not tolerate on mud-heaps, men more privileged than absolute monarchs. While the peasant is led to shout for Liberty, he is ruined by an ill-conditioned excess of it, at least in matters economic.

Closely associated with the industrial notion of "doing as you like," is a fallacy of false "independence," which dominates the whole "atmosphere" of the small farm, and when the peasant goes into the employment of another, his "feelings" must be carefully considered, otherwise he retires to his mud-heap "independence." Burn his bridges behind him, as when he goes abroad, and he is a better and more productive worker for the rest of his life. Besides, his "independence" is not worth having at any price; it is self-inflicted slavery, derived from the desire to shirk responsibility, but, at the same time made to some extent necessary by the incapacity of the Irish employer, who does not know how to manage him or how to treat him. However, I will come to the capitalist and the employer in due course.

While all these disabilities, with many more not mentioned, are inseparable from labour on the small farm, it is the only bit of our agricultural land on which there is even a pretence to the maximum production or efficiency. As I have shown in the chapters on land, the aim on the large farm, especially on the best soils, is "prairie value," grass, beasts, ease, and no

labour at all ; the indolence of the master permeates the man, and the mood of the fat ox is the ambition of both, rather than any mood that could make the land fruitful or the nation strong. Is not this a matter for the encouragement of ideas and for the development of character rather than for Acts of Parliament ?

The very richness of the soil is actually *an additional cause of inefficient labour and national decay*, vitiating the very essence of progress for the comfort of cowardly incompetence. In the neighbourhood of Derrynea, in Connemara, the valuation is about half-a-crown per head of the people, and the population decreases very little, the tillage rate being as high as possible ; in the Union of Navan, in County Meath, the valuation is £7, and the population has decreased very much, the tillage rate being as low as possible. What is not good enough for beasts, give it to men ; what is good enough for beasts, remove men from it, and let Ireland starve. Where the land is not fit for the Meath cow, put the Galway man's wife and children on it ; where the land is too good for Irish wives and children of any sort, put agrarian gamblers' cows and calves on it. Generally speaking, our rate of depopulation, and, therefore, of national destruction, is highest where the soil is richest, keeping labour least where its possible rewards are highest ; and the district of Derrynea, with its reward to labour only one-fifty-sixth of that in Meath, is one of the few districts in Ireland where the population has declined little or nothing since the famine of '46-7-8. On the other hand, the decline of the population for the same period on the bullock-fattening areas of Meath is enormous, and still going on. The most astonishing and the most degrading significance of it is that the natural wealth of the nation, instead of making the nation grow, is made an additional means to degrade labour, to make capital itself a curse, and to kill the

nation at an increasing rate. Assume a rich man dying of starvation from not knowing how to get his wealth turned into food, and we have our economic nation personified.

In the same rich County of Meath, summer after summer, during the hay harvest, numbers of able-bodied men refuse good wages, and prop themselves on the sunny side of the wall, while their wives take in washing to support the children, and sometimes take contracts more objectionable than washing. In Navan, I have seen these men week after week refusing four shillings a day, waiting till sun-set to hold a horse for sixpence, and ready at any hour to undertake a discussion on foreign politics. One of them used to tell me Russia's plans for invading India, and how the Irish Question would be affected by it. Another used to describe to me a harem he kept in India, and whenever I wanted to bring these interesting discussions to an end and get rid of my educators, I had only to ask them how they managed to keep their families without doing any work. These are economic lunatics, and ought to be locked up in some suitable place, with food only when they worked ; but, on the other hand, the "farmers" of Meath, too indolent to conduct employment regularly, offer work for only a period of the year, so that the labourers lose the habit of working regularly, and cultivate the habits rather of members of Parliament.

More shameful still, whatever the cows of Meath, and however fat, they could be more and fatter with the population trebled, labour helping Nature to support man and beast together. This is not a mere possibility ; it is an absolute certainty, assuming the employer and the labourer to be normal and efficient in their respective capacities. Whatever way I turn in my inquiry into the economy of Irish national life, I find the primary source of Irish national death in the national mind and character. The first effect that must be produced to save

Ireland is essentially a mental and moral effect, if not directly on the multitude, then, at least, on some strong and thoughtful minority who are privileged to influence the multitude. The priest can save Ireland whenever he fits himself to the task, and faces it.

Should anyone doubt the extraordinary statement I have just submitted regarding Meath and Connemara, let him study the official figures for the Unions of Navan and Oughterard, as I have done. In the census returns of Derrynea, he may find the valuation per head somewhat higher than I have put it, but I have before me a still more accurate document, specially prepared by the Government, in which the valuation works out at half-a-crown, as against £7 in parts of Meath. On the half-a-crown basis, we have intense congestion and over-cultivation—I have seen a “field” four yards by three. On the £7 basis we have it more like a man to the mile, with the small decaying towns as grey, solitary clusters in the green grass that stretches almost unbroken to the horizon, feeding England while Ireland starves. Not content with official figures, I have visited both regions, and examined them carefully in the concrete. Where labour is thus barred out from its natural possibilities, how can it avoid degradation; and thus degraded, how can it help deranging the productive process? Labour is one of the three agents of production, and each being an essential, any of the three suffices to derange the whole system. In Ireland, they all work that way with the most fatal uniformity, degrading one another, and making the growth of wealth quite impossible. It would be easy to show that the well-intentioned work of the Congested Districts Board is largely done to fix congestion instead of relieving it, which can never be until the good land supports men as well as beasts.

In any other civilised country, such a set of facts and con-



ditions would at once rouse the whole people to prompt action ; the Press would send special commissioners, and have the meaning of it proclaimed every morning ; the collective will and sense of self-preservation would expose even to Parliaments their own inanity ; and the man who dared to confuse or to oppose the purpose would be driven to silence.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE AGENTS OF PRODUCTION.—LABOUR.

*(Continued.)*

WE have not as much space for Labour in its miscellaneous aspect as in its agrarian application, and it is not necessary, seeing that the agrarian interest, though declining, and embracing a diminished amount of life every year, still exceeds all our other industries together—the opposite of what we find in Great Britain and other normally conditioned countries, where the other industries together are enormously in excess of the agrarian. Comparatively, we are unable to provide ourselves except in agrarian products, and in these inefficiently. That broad basis all round on which, in normal conditions, the various industries support each other, creating demand for each other's products, multiplying employment, and extending the foundation of national life, is fatally wanting with us, and we tend rather to depend on a single declining industry, sending its productive value abroad for our non-agrarian supplies and even for agrarian. I have found Danish bacon, not to mention American, in pig-producing districts in Connacht, and I have seen potatoes from Malta in Navan, far inferior to the local potatoes, and sold at the same price on the same day.

In addition, our failure in employing ourselves to provide ourselves lays us peculiarly open to destruction in regard to that great economic safety-valve called “the Mobility of Labour,” which, among the bulk of us, has little meaning or

application. Wherever a nation's industrial system is normally varied, providing the various necessities of life on a general plan, it may be that when adversity overtakes one industry, additional prosperity in other industries compensates it; and in that way other peoples meet their industrial shocks with comparative ease, distributing among other industries the labour displaced from an industry that happens to be unfortunate. In short, what is a mere temporary hardship to other people is actual destruction to us, without an alternative between the devil of potato blight and the deep sea of emigration. Sunk so exclusively in our agrarianism, and conducting it badly at that, the immobility of our labour is so complete that we can meet industrial shocks only by deductions from the national life, like a hungry mother throwing some of her children into the sea to be able to preserve the lives of some others. This ruin has pursued us persistently for generations, accentuated at times, but always active, and yet no one seems to study its meaning or effect. Indeed, we have "leaders" who teach us that our ruin is our salvation, recommending a still more exclusive agrarianism to us.

The immediate purpose in this chapter, however, is to trace the disabilities and inefficiencies by which Labour itself contributes to keep the Agents of Production asunder in industries apart from Agriculture. In this connection, to put it very briefly, we have not yet cultivated that industrial habit of life, or that industrial shape of character which is necessary to attract Capital to employ us in our own country. But, since this is a very strong indictment, let me submit proofs, and let the reader be the judge as to the justice of my severity. I know that levelling charges of this kind against my fellow-countrymen has its own peculiar objection, but I sometimes find the duty of presenting them more unpleasant to myself than

to those who censure me for it. The fundamental position I have to defend is that a nation's life must not be sacrificed to the prejudice, to the selfishness, or to the industrial inefficiencies of any class, however dominant, and I think I have already shown that the agrarian dominion, organised to abolish landlordism, is much more effective in abolishing the nation.

Let us first take some illustrations from industries that are supposed to be well established. Only last year Father Farrell, of Navan, found it necessary to deliver a strong criticism on Messrs. Clayton's textile workers, of whom a ruinous percentage could not be got to come in time, with the result of leaving expensive machinery unworked, power wasted, and fixed expenses unproductive generally, not to mention other workers, on the spot, but unable to work without the co-operation of those absent. Father Farrell is not the man to interfere in such a matter without weighty reasons. He is one of the priests who have learnt to see how ruinous is inefficiency.

I am told on authority that one of the main causes for shutting up the great cotton mills at Drogheda was that the work-people could never be got to their work punctually. The end of the once extensive iron-works at Arigna, in Leitrim, was the whole night staff getting drunk, defying the foreman, and letting the fluxed metal cool to a solid state in the furnaces. I have seen that last charge blasted out in blocks, and have spent hours among grassy ruins, the site of which might by this time have become the centre of an industrial city but for that night's industrial indiscipline and drunkenness. The coal is there still, and so is the ore, as good for the purpose as any in these islands, but the capitalist invited to unite with local labour in renewing those furnaces will not be much encouraged by the manner of their closing. He will naturally ask, "What change has been

made in the industrial mood and mind to prevent my faring like the last capitalists in Arigna?" In the same county, a gentleman took me to see one of his men at work, and when we had passed on, said to me, "That man killed eleven of my cattle last year. I have proof of it beyond question." "Yet you employ him?" "If I discharge him, he may kill twice eleven next year." One morning this summer, I was walking with an Irish employer, and we met a workman whom the manager had discharged a week ago for habitual drunkenness. He had a grievance, and stopped us to present it, in a manner at once familiar and insolent. He began by abusing the manager, and failing to excite the principal's sympathy, ended by abusing him also. His grievance was not precisely the discharge, but the "attack on his character" in the "allegation" that he had been drunk, and he was staggering drunk while expressing his indignation! The assumption at the bottom of it all in his mind, drunk or sober, was that the employer was bound as a duty to keep him employed without regard to his own side of the contract.

Things of this kind not merely indicate the inefficiency of Irish labour in Ireland, but are also peculiar to Ireland. Probably nowhere else in civilisation could we find a promising industry shut down in a night through the drunkenness of the whole staff, employers widely hampered by their work-people coming late as an established habit, or a man discharged for drunkenness and confronting his former employer in such a manner, defending his sobriety in drunken abuse.

At this moment I could make a depressing list in a small area of Irish employers who, to my knowledge, are prevented from extending operations and employing more labour solely from want of men on whom they could rely; and, worse still, this applies to moral character rather than to muscle, the main

difficulty being the lack of that trustworthiness by which alone an employer can so delegate himself as to conduct operations on any scale beyond his mere personal possibilities. When I compare this ruinous state of things with the way in which British industry is assisted and developed by the employer's delegation of himself in the conscience of his assistants, I cannot but conclude that the decay of Irish industry and the Irish nation is due largely to the character of our working classes. Against this we have the undisputed fact of the Irish people's efficiency abroad, but I am satisfied that it is because they are so distributed as to be forced to accept discipline that is not Irish, instead of being left a prey to their own incapacity for industrial discipline, as at home, where they show themselves ready to organise anything but what might help them to live.

At least a few priests among us appear to be rising to a sense of their responsibility in this connection, and while revising the proofs of these chapters, I note two remarkable utterances, as reported by the *Irish Daily Independent* for June 22nd, 1906. One is by Father Dowling, of Cork :—"I fear that one of the great difficulties we have to contend with is that the Irish worker will not give an honest day's work for his day's pay." The other, on the same occasion, is by Canon MacGeeney :—"Father Dowling reflected what appeared to be the general opinion when he said that Irish workmen didn't do their work honestly, and thereby placed the whole country, and themselves especially, at a very serious disadvantage." I have myself been asserting the fact for years, rewarded by resolutions denouncing me for it as a "foul calumniator of my race and country"; but I am all the more interested to find myself now in the company of the more thoughtful of the clergy.

The foregoing facts stand for a variety of industries. Do they not illustrate Labour's own share in deterring Capital,

keeping the Agents of Production apart, and keeping the Irish nation fatally fettered in her decay? My facts and illustrations are not of a kind to invite the capitalist to employ Irish labour, but I think they are of a kind to open Labour's eyes to its own share in its own destruction and in that of the country, and it is plain until we improve the attitude of the Irish worker towards work, Capital must remain diffident, Production must remain deficient, and Ireland must decay in the same proportion. The broad, fatal fact is that we do not produce workers, but merely men and women to be disciplined into workers in other countries, where the industrial "atmosphere" is so different. We lack Character rather than Capital. Character is equivalent to Capital. The man who has character need not be without capital to employ him anywhere in the civilised world. I would have that character developed in the Irish people, but it cannot be done by telling them in leading articles that they are the finest people in the world, merely in order to sell more copies of the newspaper. How does the individual man conquer his faults? By facing them, and it is not otherwise with the nation. The difficulty is that so few dare to tell the nation the truth about herself. There is a too common type of patriot that can love his country only by assuming her perfect, which is more like selfishness. We get nearer to real patriotism in the man who loves his country at her worst, without a conceivable advantage of a material kind that he can see in belonging to her. Let us start from the facts, at their worst, and then alter them so that character may grow, attracting in its growth all the other agencies that go to extend the possibilities of life in Ireland. The man who kills character kills nationhood, a murderer, multiplied.

Apart from our well-established industries, with which I have been dealing, we have still a number of industries quite



important to the nation if properly pursued, but remaining in conditions not far removed from industrial barbarism. Take tin-plate working, for example. In England it stands on a level with other industries, employing and supporting large numbers of respectable families in the large towns; but in most of Ireland, when we want to set a man down on the most despicable level, we call him "a tinker."

A friend of mine, who belongs to this profession, visits me in the country several times a year, and I try to entertain him at least in the style and manner to which he has been accustomed. He is the owner of a very small ass and a very big family, and he arrives in his accustomed state, with the younger children poking their heads from the mouths of sacks hung over the donkey's back. The bigger children trudge on next, and the wife brings up the rere, silent and depressed, with a heel off one boot, her big toe through the other, and her hair in something more than artistic disorder. I was first introduced to this family on the road outside my fence. It was in January, and there was sleet. The whole eight, mainly barefooted, were huddled under a stolen cart-sheet that was far too small to cover them. I got some of our own children, about the same ages, to take them milk, eggs, and other things, and I think they were the better for their mission. From that dates the *entente cordiale* between my allies and myself, and though I regret to say that my neighbours miss things during the visits of my guests, I never miss anything myself.

I know another family of tin-plate workers, but our acquaintance is less close—perhaps because they are of an upper class, having a more or less fixed habitation, and no little of a name. I first saw the husband in a fight on a quiet afternoon in the main street, about fifty yards from the police barracks. For a considerable time he and another of the profession



hammered each other on the faces, and the sounds they got out of each other's head bones ought to have awakened the police, even at midnight. When I thought they had so battered each other that I could beat both if necessary, I offered my friendly intervention as a neutral power, and there was a cessation of hostilities, with a hospitable proposal that we should all three go on the spree together, but finding I had some money in my pockets, I declined the invitation, and left the terms of peace to be negotiated without me. Now, to show that these people are not for ever below respectable possibilities, one of the families of the two combatants is descended from a king of England, and bears his name. A female of this royal line has been convicted by the local magistrates sixty times.

Is the earning so bad that all in this calling must of necessity be on such a level? My friend with the small ass and the big family informs me that he can make "ten shillings a-day whenever he likes." That is £150 a-year, and more than our average dispensary doctor's salary. My friend's possible income is corroborated by independent facts, and wherever I see a tinker settling down to industrial sanity, I find him soon able to buy fee-simple and become a landlord of house property, even in the little towns of Connacht. On the whole, I am satisfied that a youth apprenticed to an efficient tinker has a prospect of a better income in the future than the average bank clerk destined to become "a gentleman." What but character is required to put our tin-plate industry on a decent footing, adding its proper share to the national strength, instead of remaining as I have attempted to describe it? There are social prejudices against the industry, but is not the want of character the cause of that also? For my own part, I think it is a more respectable thing to make a good saucepan than to keep a bad public-house.

I could mention other industries in which the dignity of honest work has not yet risen far above barbarism among us. In this respect, we are only where other nations were a hundred and fifty years ago. Most of the productive industries, in most countries, had to evolve from semi-savage conditions, but with us the evolution is particularly slow. In the ancient city of Newcastle-on-Tyne, an ancient subway leads down under the town wall over the rocky bank of the river, and the curious concentration of shoemaking and cobbling along the passage once led me to inquire about the cause. The inquiry led me back to the fact that, down to the end of the Anglo-Scottish feuds, the nomad cobblers had congregated for protection outside the city wall near that riverside entrance, and never afterwards ceased to make that neighbourhood their chief centre. Now they have their industry on an efficient footing, levelled up to the status of self-respecting life, but two centuries ago it must have been very like the trade of the tinker in Ireland at the present time, a sore in the social organism rather than a source of strength to the nation. The history of the change can be traced without leaving the subway above mentioned.

I think the facts justify me in asserting that the inefficiency of Irish labour, the character of the Irish labourer, and the influences that defer his evolution to his true industrial destiny, are strong causes keeping capital apart from its productive purpose, and preventing that normal Combination of the Agents of Production without which the Irish national basis can never arrive at the conditions of growth. Short of "Land, Labour, and Capital" joining together to produce wealth and to enlarge life, in a way yet comparatively unknown to us, our civilisation itself, not to mention nationality, remains in a state of very precarious balance, top-heavy, developing the orna-

mental attributes of life out of all proportion to its material basis, and ignoring all the considerations essential to the creation of anything worth decorating. Let life grow, and it will decorate itself, as sure as the rose-bush harmoniously conditioned. At present, we are rather occupied to decorate what has no existence, and to disguise its absence by the decoration. Neither native instinct nor demonstrated vision has yet enabled us to grasp the primary essentials of progressive life.

Yet it was not always so with the workers of Ireland. The very ruins of our ancient masonry are standing proofs of their fine workmanship in feudal times, before their natural leaders had yet sold themselves to a hostile nation, and even the lost secrets of mortar-making shown in these same ruins indicate an order of industrial skill and knowledge still unrivalled in our own times, not to mention many other concrete survivals of an industrial efficiency that has gone from us; and these concrete data are confirmed in the literature of our authentic history, revealing long-continued records of British complaint against us on the ground that they could not stand against us as producers of wealth. We need not go beyond the history of Britain itself for the proofs of our past efficiency, in the days before it was degraded by British relations, and I would ask our British critics to reflect on the unspeakable meanness of imposing degradations on a people and then blaming them for the results. In this connection, I have pleasure in recommending a most valuable essay by Miss Murray on "The Commercial Relations between England and Ireland." It was written as a thesis in Economic History for the University of London, and it brings up to our own time, with additional data of scope and inference, the work begun by Kane Hutchinson and others.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE AGENTS OF PRODUCTION—CAPITAL.

CAPITAL is treated as the third of the Agents of Production, and may be defined as that part of existing wealth which is saved from consumption to be devoted to the production of farther wealth. For example, all implements, machinery, etc., used in producing commodities are Capital. It is not Capital until, and unless, it is expended in wealth-production. Like the body of the wealth of the community, from which it is taken, it is the product of Land, Labour, and Capital previously operating together. If a civilised people were to consume the whole of what they produced, as savages do, they could not renew or extend the capital required for farther or greater production; they could but revert to industrial barbarism, with only manual energy and natural material to attempt future production. It is not possible to ascertain exactly the extent by which Capital increases the productiveness of man's mere crude energy, but it is enormous. Lacking this third agent, Capital, his methods must obviously decline to the crudest, and he could neither support the same volume nor enjoy the same standard of life. In fact, the use of capital is an essential distinction of civilisation from savagery.

We have good examples of Capital in the seed saved by the farmer to produce his next crop, and in the implements and tools that help him to produce it, all these being so much saved from previous Production at one time or another, with a

view to farther or increased Production ; but these are mere instances, and in a well developed industrial community, the forms in which Capital exists and works are practically countless.

We may take it broadly that the greater the variety of the occupations and purposes for which Capital employs Labour among a people, the sounder is their industrial basis, and the more secure their social growth. It means a people employed to supply their own needs largely and variously, as against a people like the Irish, whose invested Capital is confined to comparatively few pursuits, depending on the products of these to buy the necessities of civilisation all round, and on the foreigner to supply them. Some leading causes of this are explained lower down.

As I think I have shown in the case of Land and Labour, the use and value of Capital to the nation are ruinously restricted by the organised hindrances of our agrarianism, and by the peculiar inefficiencies of Labour itself. To the employer or capitalist, Labour is simply a thing to be bought in order to make a profit out of the purchase ; but, as in buying any other commodity, the defects in it must depress the price (wages), and, when excessive, prevent the transaction altogether, leaving Labour to emigrate, and the Capitalist to go to grass.

Before condemning the grazier as an unredeemed curse, we must in all honesty reckon with the peculiar inefficiencies by which Labour itself repels Capital from employing it. Presumably, the man who controls land wants to make the most of it, and though he has his own inefficiencies in the matter of directing Labour, it is fair to presume that he would put his capital into wages and tillage, in preference to beasts, if he found the choice more satisfactory. In the agrarian connection of Capital, what we need at once is to raise the employer's capacity to control and direct Labour so as to make it more

profitable than beasts, and, on the other hand, to raise the efficiency of Labour, so that the efficient employer may find increased inducements to employ it. I could submit many instances of Irish farmers offering higher wages than the same Labour gets in England, while the labourer goes backwards and forwards between the two islands, declining to work at home, though quite efficient under the better discipline and direction in Great Britain. Divide a number of Irishmen individually among foreigners, and there are no better workers; employ them together in Ireland, and they are much less efficient. In the employment and control of Labour, as well as in Universities, "atmosphere" counts for much.

Capital has also its classifications, such as "Fixed," "Circulating," "Personal," etc. Some of the distinctions are almost merely academic; but, in our Irish conditions, it seems well to explain the three just mentioned, especially the last. Capital is called Fixed when in a form from which it cannot readily be converted. For example, a watchmaker's plant could not be disposed of and turned into farm implements as easily as a bootmaker turns boots he has made into a supply of new leather; and while the (Fixed) Capital in a factory and its plant may not change its form for generations, the Capital in the products of the factory, not being Fixed, may change its form an indefinite number of times in the year. A given sum of it may take the form of wages to-day, finding its way into finished commodities a month hence, and after that returning to the factory in the form of raw material to go the round for the production of farther finished commodities, by farther wages and labour.

Circulating Capital is seen in the illustration just given, and may be defined as the opposite of Fixed Capital, because continually "going round" and changing its form at each turn.



A butter merchant circulates his Capital about fifty times a year, his settlements being weekly, while other kinds of circulating capital make their rounds and change their form much more slowly. A tanner, for example, has sometimes to wait twelve months before he can complete the various processes from the raw hide to the finished leather. That is one reason why a higher profit is usually got in a commodity that takes a long time to produce or to exchange, than from one that can be put through rapidly.

Personal Capital ought to have a peculiar interest for Irishmen, because of its ruinous rarity with them, and it may be defined as wealth invested in persons by technical training and other forms of education that increase their effectiveness as producers of wealth. It may even take the form of moral character, as it does in the habitual trustworthiness of Englishmen, which has much to do with their country's industrial greatness. In an indirect, but very effective way, personal capital exists in the moral efficiency of the clergyman who raises his congregation to a higher sense of their duties in life, or in any other way advances their effectiveness in industry, and in this connection alone an incalculable good to this country is immediately practicable. Take the farmer's son who enters Holy Orders. He might readily get himself so instructed in the economics of Agriculture that he could soon work happy revolutions in his parish, making every man's land of more value and of more use to him, and thereby creating profitable employment for people now emigrating and depopulating his parish, not merely in the directly increased production, but also in the increased purchasing power conferred on the producers by their increased production. Every increase in the products of one industry tends to increase the demand for the products of other



industries, with increased employment to correspond. Making his congregation fit to be trusted by each other, and teaching them the need to trust each other, the clergyman could make the co-operative idea practicable among them, which, apart from the material profit, would re-act towards yet farther trustworthiness in them, opening the way to yet farther possibilities of progress. It is in this way that the progressive peasants of Denmark have managed to set up their own co-operative bacon factories, and to beat Irish bacon curers in their own market.

Personal Capital may take other forms, some of which may be inferred from the foregoing illustrations. It is not usual to devote so much space to Personal Capital, and so little to other forms of Capital, but as I reminded the reader at the beginning, I have not merely to expound the outlines of an economic system but also to apply it to the peculiar and even unprecedented conditions with which we have to do in this country. I am quite aware of my violence to proportion and balance, but I am concerned with the life and death of the Irish nation rather than with dialectical niceties to anticipate the cultured criticism of the academic reader.

Sir Horace Plunkett himself may remember the severity with which I felt bound to treat his polemics recently, but my severity on that occasion is an additional reason why I should recognise the fact that no other man in Ireland works as hard, or does as much, to create in the Irish people the industrial efficiency by which alone the nation may survive decay, and which comes largely within the proper definition of Personal Capital. In so far as the improved industrial faculty thus produced comes to be applied to the production of wealth in Ireland, our industrial evolution generally must tend upward, enlarging life in the place of decay, and substituting real

nationality for idle noise. It is most interesting, too, to study how he tries to guard against his educational results being ultimately diverted from their intended purpose—a difficulty which has not been wholly met even by the most highly-developed nations. There are two great schools supported by the municipality of Paris, one for boys, the other for girls, and Sir Joshua Fitcher tells us that the girls' school, on its almost ideal level of efficiency, technical and otherwise, is largely a recruiting ground for the Paris ballet. To guard against training Irish people for foreign wealth producers, Sir Horace Plunkett confines his work as far as possible to *actual industry*, helping those already in it to improve their industrial character and their work, so that the personal capital invested in their training by the State may be embodied in the better industry of the nation; but even then, he cannot prevent leakage, and already many Irish people trained or partly trained by the Department have found their way to the higher wages in other countries, mainly from want of the completed economic development of their own country. While Sir Horace Plunkett, the Protestant, is thus occupied, extremely hard worked, and making a present of his own pay to show Irish Catholics how to make their living in Ireland, I look in vain for any considerable number of leading Catholics, lay or clerical, making equal efforts for the preservation of their own people. The comparative failure of the Department's Technical Schemes, so far, is not due to their design or direction, but rather to our poverty in the all-round character and initiative which are necessary to put knowledge or training of any kind to practical and reproductive purposes. It is one thing to train a person technically; it is another thing to develop in him the moral qualities that would make his training workable and profitable. The priests and Sir Horace Plunkett, working together, might do

something, but then, has he not written a book condemning "the Roman Catholic religion"?

I deal with personal capital at such unusual length, because, in our unusual conditions, it is the one form of capital in which we have not a surplus. Our fatal failure to bring capital and labour together for productive purposes in general, which is the most fundamental function of all, leaves us with capital to spare for such purposes as employ the minimum of labour. See how over-capitalised our public-houses are. I know a typical town with sixty-three public-houses to 900 inhabitants. The average license is worth about £500, or say, a total of £30,000, and the average income of the holder, from his trade, is less than £150, which includes the remuneration for his labour and time. Some of these houses do not sell enough drink to pay the license duty, not to speak of profit, but the duty is paid because the license keeps up the value of the house. The graziers' business also is over-capitalised, as it requires the minimum of labour to work it. The aim in grazing is not to bring the agents of production together, but rather to apply capital to natural resources without labour. It requires little study of our industrial structure to see that we can find capital for enterprises exactly in proportion as they can be carried on without labour, which shows that the country suffers less from want of capital than from want of the character in the labourer which would make him attractive to the employer, and from want of the character in the employer which would enable him profitably to control the labourer. I repeat, we want character, not capital, and we want it not merely in one class but in all our classes.

Sir Horace Plunkett's interesting attempt in Ireland to create personal capital at the expense of the State is essentially in the nature of Socialism, and has practically no parallel in

Great Britain and other countries, where the great bulk of industrial efficiency is evolved, not through the State, but by private initiative, principally that of the family, sustained through the various occupations in which they make their living. The personal capital invested in the English mechanic is simply so much wealth, from the spending of which his parents have abstained in order to apprentice him. That, too, in the long run, is the soundest of all methods, since it is not dependent on the vagaries of government. The great danger of all such undertakings by the State is that the means may be expended without realising the intention, causing a net loss to the nation, as in the ballet dancers from *l'Ecole de Paris*. The Department has not yet produced any ballet dancers for us, but it may be because we have no ballet, and I do not see how it can avoid training Irish housekeepers to keep American houses. Still, since the private man in Ireland will not make himself efficient for his work, I suppose the State may try to help, though it is an indulgence sanctioned by the State only in Ireland. In other words, the Government undertakes to do for Irish industry what it will not undertake in Great Britain.

What, then, are we to make of the national complaint that the Government is the cause of our failure at home, while we succeed abroad? We succeed abroad, simply because the foreigner forces us to accommodate ourselves to his higher and more efficient activity. We do not succeed at home, because, governed by our own conditions and stand-points only, we fail to realise the efficient level. When the really efficient individual appears among us we are as likely to boycott him as to be influenced by him. In short, at home, the controlling conditions are those of inefficiency, and efficiency is the exception. That is why there are fewer of us each year that comes round. In the modern public life of this country not

one man has attempted to present the real causes of our decay without making himself unpopular by it, so dear is our inefficiency to us, so intolerant are we of any influence that could raise us to the level of progressive peoples.

The most important aspect of personal capital to us as a nation is that it unites all other kinds of capital with labour and with material; in other words, that it tends to supply the missing link between the agents of production among us. Personal capital means industrial efficiency, and industrial efficiency means an attraction to the owners of both capital and material. When the personal capital exists in the capitalist and employer himself, we have it in its most efficient form, but it can exist nowhere without helping to bring the agents of production together and to arrest national decay; and it can be wanting nowhere without putting the Agents of Production asunder and destroying the nation in the same degree. The man who first hit on the idea of encouraging the investment of capital in Irish industrial character must have seen deeply into the causes of our economic destruction.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE AGENTS OF PRODUCTION.—CAPITAL.

*(Continued.)*

SINCE capital is wealth saved from consumption, and expended in the production of further wealth, abstinence must be practised to produce it; people must spend on themselves less than they have, putting more to help production, and increasing what they may have to spend or to add to capital at some future time.

That proposition is universally accepted, and yet it must be modified in its application to Ireland, where the saving is practised in a large measure, not to increase Irish capital or to advance Irish production, but rather to employ foreign labour in the production that takes the Irish market, and drives Irish labour to the emigrant ship. We export our capital and our labour together, and both, at work abroad, under the control we are incapable to organise at home, contribute farther to cripple such capital and labour as remain with us.

While we have shouted, our economic centre of gravity has steadily shifted to England, shifting our national centre of gravity along with it. So long as the impulse of self-preservation takes precedence of others, people must gravitate towards where they can best make their living; and we make a poor use of history unless we see that in the long run their economic location determines their national location. The second



generation of the O'Rorkes and the O'Haras in England become ashamed of everything Irish, and the greater their success in life, the more un-Irish do they become, even in regard to their religion. Hardly anything can have more to do with this removal and transformation of the Irish than their failure to make use of capital in the employment of labour in their own country, and, in its turn, this failure is caused mainly by their not investing Personal Capital in themselves at home. Personal Capital may be said to be an essential department of Industrial Character, and that is just what we decline to develop, even when we have the means. I will attempt to explain this phenomenon of a nation's production declining, as determined by the labour employed, and yet affording a continuous surplus of capital or savings for investment in other countries.

The fact that, in our national poverty, we save from our inadequate income a surplus of capital beyond what we use, may at first seem an admirable manifestation of an economic virtue, but on examination it turns out to be an economic vice of a most fatal kind, first because the saving is done at the expense of the necessary standard of living, and, secondly, because we are incapable to make productive use of what we save, handing it over to others and starving Irish labour. Where labour is starved, the nation is starved, and that is why so many of our so-called upper class are in the stage bordering on distress. In no other European country have the upper classes suffered more from not recognising their economic dependence on the lower classes; and in no other country has the evil effect of it on the lower classes militated more ruinously against both.

I have said that the Irish surplus of savings was at the expense of the necessary standard of living. We know that the peasant is our national foundation, and that his average



family income is computed at less than £30 a year for five persons. The saved surplus cannot come from these ; therefore, it must come from a small minority of the people. In other words, the essential majority starve, in so far as a sufficient and progressive standard of living is concerned, and the minority have a surplus, derived from the miseries of that majority, and invested out of Ireland. The landlord is not the only sinner here ; the prosperous and patriotic publican is a greater sinner still. I have investigated districts in Connacht where they pay 4s. an acre for land, and 12s. an acre for drink, and where the patriotic publican is always most careful to send his surplus away to employ foreign labour, helping to produce the importations that send the Irish out of Ireland. So do we save a surplus of one of the agents of production, capital, withdraw it from co-operation with the other two agents, and then use it to destroy the nation.

The saving that produces capital takes various forms, for example :—(1) Persons controlling industry commonly set off an annual allowance against the wear and tear of time in their fixed capital, repairing plant, replacing old machines, and sometimes strengthening their credit by additions to their circulating capital also. In the case of great companies this allowance often takes the name of “depreciation” and “reserve,” but in private enterprise the equivalent takes place, and in either case it is Capital in one of its truest forms, and not the less useful to the public, or the less safe to its owner because invested under his own control. (2) People live on less than the income they receive, investing the remainder as may seem wise. The intention of setting it to capitalise the labour of the nation seldom occurs to them, but much of it takes that form whether they will or not. Placed in a bank, it finds its way out in overdrafts, bills, mortgages, etc., to extend

the operations and the profit of people who have less capital than enterprise, the credit of the bank satisfying the depositor as to its safety ; others buy shares in productive companies, and so their capital comes to meet labour still more directly, if not always as safely.

Even apart from the stockbroker and the banker, there is a continual shifting of capital to its function between man and man, in private loans, mortgages, etc., effected through solicitors ; and then we have the man who is his own capitalist wholly, saving from what he produces to make good the constant defects in the means by which he produces it, or extending his operations to produce on a larger scale.

In their peculiar circumstances, it is of extreme importance to Irishmen that they study these media of capitalistic mobility. At least three of the four mentioned, omitting the stockbroker, are vitally defective, and in the same proportion, work evil to the nation. Irish banks that make big dividends continually lend money at 10 per cent. to the peasants, on the joint security of the borrower and two others, commonly pledging ten to twenty times the amount of the sum borrowed. Ten per cent. on a twenty-fold security is a financial phenomenon little known in Europe except in Ireland. Also the Irish banks are the main channels through which our surplus capital finds its way to support the labour of other nations instead of our own. The private medium is worse still, working in the form of "gombeen," often at 30 or 40 per cent., and seldom so low as 20 ; and the man who capitalises himself is almost as unfortunate as the borrower, in his ignorance of how to expend his capital to the best advantage. An amazing body of wealth is lost to this poor country every year through the sole cause of our farmers not using the right kinds of manures, seeds, and implements.

The meaning of these things may be better understood when we reflect that in the industrial life of a people, the growth of Capital in its various forms, and the way it is used, make the great bulk of the difference between savage and civilised conditions. From the bush dragged over hay seed to the most complete and the most expensive piece of agricultural machinery ever put into a field or farm, all is capital, and it is similar in other industries. Take away from the industrial capitalist everything that can be called capital, and nothing is left but his crude physical energy ; he has not even the personal capital or acquired capacity that would enable him to borrow and attack raw material afresh ; he is substantially in the position of a savage, and in the economic sense, a savage in fact.

Now, it is singular that though in Ireland, capital leaves labour to starve, there is yet no lack of capital on the whole. It is sent out of Ireland by its owners to places where labour, being more efficient, is more capable to produce a return for it and to guarantee its safety. Mr. John Garvey makes a calculation of the Irish millions sterling, net, invested out of Ireland, but in view of our deficient statistics, I do not see how anyone can state a sum, even approximately. Such quantities are arrived at by Sir Robert Griffin for the British Islands as a whole, but we have not yet evolved the required statistical completeness for this country separately, though this ought to be done. What may be stated with safety is that we can trace considerable sums of industrial capital going out of Ireland, in excess of any such capital coming in.

It is unfortunate that we have no reliable figures to indicate this surplus of Irish capital. If we had, they would show us more clearly how we stood, starving our own labour, and supporting the labour of other countries with our capital. They

might also help to remove a most mischievous belief that our lack of industry was due solely to our lack of capital. So long as we remain in this error, we are not likely to see the true causes of our industrial failure, but it might be otherwise if we could show beyond question the surplus capital sent abroad by the Irish people. Some think that the amount is very large, but, on the other hand, we are apt to forget that there is a body of British and other outside capital invested in Ireland, which would have to be deducted from the Irish capital sent out in arriving at the Irish surplus. The Londoner who buys Dublin brewery shares or Belfast shipbuilding shares is an investor of British capital in Ireland, and these instances will indicate that the deduction for our balance must be very large. Any surplus, however, would suffice to show that lack of capital was not the cause of our lack of industry. So long as we assume it to be so, we ignore the true causes, and confirm our industrial decay. The true causes are to be found neither in the lack of labour nor in the lack of capital, since we have a surplus of each. The labour surplus is obvious enough to all, but to the student the capital surplus is quite as obvious. The emigrant ship is too tangible evidence of the one, but the evidence of the other is quite as complete to anyone who can see beyond the obvious. Besides, a surplus of either tends to beget a surplus of the other. Wherever the inefficiency of the labourer repels capital from employing him, a labour surplus is created at once, leaving idle also the capital by which it ought to be employed; and wherever the inefficiency of the capitalist incapacitates him to control labour, a surplus of capital comes similarly into existence, finding its way to other countries, where the mutual efficiency of the labourer and the capitalist assures its reproductiveness and its security. In other words, wherever personal capital is effectively invested to pro-

duce industrial efficiency, alike in the worker and in those who control him, there capital is sure to be attracted, and labour must meet its reward ; and in favourable conditions like these, such is the mobility of capital that the Irish sea is no more a barrier than the frontiers of a parish. British capitalists have lately completed an arrangement to capitalise the labour of semi-slaves from China in the Transvaal, and their capital would not be found less mobile in regard to Ireland if our workers and employers showed a really efficient capacity to organise industry. Yet it is a quite national assumption with us that want of capital is the sole cause of our industrial decay. I have it on high authority that the Bank of Ireland, at College Green alone, pays dividends every year on £40,000,000 of Irish money invested out of Ireland.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE AGENTS OF PRODUCTION—CAPITAL.

(*Continued.*)

HAVING examined how our mismanagement of material resources, our surplus of ordinary capital, our poverty in personal capital, and our inefficiency in regard to labour, prevent the agents of production operating together among us to save the national life, let us now see the Irish capitalist's peculiar part in the same result. Originally, in all countries, the natural source of capital is the land, property in it and incomes from it being so much safer and larger than others. Land is the only indestructible form of property, and besides, the landlord capitalist in early social conditions seldom leaves anyone else a chance to become a capitalist. As lately as a hundred and fifty years ago, the English industrial capital in no way dependent on landed interest and influence was a comparative trifle, but in time, industries with capital less dependent on land, once safely started, capitalised themselves and their future growth, bringing into existence additional wealth *of their own*, from which additional capital is derived, and showing possibilities of profit that attract surplus capital from other sources. The landowners and the townsmen directly or indirectly dependent on the productiveness of the land were the first capitalists to found the great industries that have now for generations more than capitalised their own growth in Great Britain.

While that far-reaching development took place across the Channel, the state of relations between the two islands made its



extension to Ireland impracticable ; the Irish landowner, owing his status to England, and deriving his means from Ireland, was on the English side against those dependent on his land, and instead of capitalising the labour of his own community, like the British landlord, he was called upon to crush them, and found it necessary to do so even in defence of his title. He was England's weapon against Irish restitution. This happening at the period when throughout Europe the industrial transition from the agrarian to the mechanical was taking place, it prevented the advantages being duly accomplished in Ireland, which remained still agrarian, and crude at that, lacking the additional and fuller life which the other countries now enjoyed from science and machinery.

In her own interests, England had found it necessary to practise political repression against the Irish, and in doing it, she had employed the very men and the very classes in Ireland who, otherwise, might have capitalised Irish industrial energy, and enabled the country to run on new wheels with the rest of the western world. When the great Duke of Bridgewater and Brindley, his engineer, were laying the industrial foundations of Lancashire, our own aristocracy and industrial classes were still engaged in mutually ruinous hostilities.

The effect of this on Irish industry may be better understood when we reflect that in all the centuries from the time of the Romans down to the period before us, less industrial progress had taken place in Europe than in the single century following, during which, it would be economically true to say, children, families, and even cities, sprang out of cog wheels, building up great communities where anything of the kind had been impossible until the mechanical development made it actual. Then the ruin of Ireland began in earnest ; first in the comparative sense, through the progress of the other countries,

but much more through the other countries having now become increasingly able to supply goods which our agrarian people could no longer supply for themselves. Machinery had displaced the manual crafts in both countries, but the Irish had acquired no proper share in the greater substitute, prevented by the hostility between the national energy and those who might be in a position to capitalise it for productive purposes. The very forces which meant additional strength to other countries, meant additional ruin to Ireland. With all crude alike, she held her own, but not now.

In so far as I am aware, not one Irish historian has ever as much as mentioned the meaning of these things to the Irish national existence or to the subsequent state of the country, though they devote themselves at length to the comparatively trivial effects of the English statutes against Irish industry in previous times. Whatever the present effect of these shameful statutes, it is a trifle compared with that of the causes I present here, and even apart from my proofs, it ought to be plain to any reflective mind that those old statutes, now so long dead, could not account for our present conditions without the co-operative continuation of causes more powerful than themselves in the meantime. Like Confucians, we fix ourselves on a piece of history as irrelevant as it is ancient, and make it the unalterable basis of our behaviour in the changed and changing conditions of our own day and of the future.

Driven before the bayonet and the bludgeon during one century, and led by the nose during the next, we halt at present, doubting, to ascertain our lost perspective, our crippled intelligence struggling to bring together the stray ends of our half-lost life, throwing over a great leader to-day, another to-morrow, to indicate that life at last tries to obey the order of its sane growth, without regard to alien tyranny or to domestic

fallacy still more tyrannical. We are not yet much more than a generation removed from the pike as our hope of nationhood, and with the antecedents as we see, the remnant of us still here may well lack the industrial character that proceeds from economic redemption long achieved.

Our Aristocracy, who ought to have capitalised us originally, having continued among us in nominal peace, with the blood of our fathers still red on their hands, and the desecration of our altars still fresh in their records, boasted of their dominant cruelties rather than sympathised with us in our ruin, though their own ruin was involved in it, a fact which they are beginning to see only now, and only a few of them even now. Instead of investing their capital to employ us and to save themselves, even at the eleventh hour, they organised an official and social ostracism against us worse than war itself, because destroying us as surely, and degrading us before destruction ; they unfitted us to be employed, then declared us unfit for employment, and then sent their capital abroad, with our human surplus in the same cargo.

Contemporary with that ostracism, directing and confirming its effects, was a sectarian ascendancy still more hateful and more fatal, which made it a kind of unwritten crime for a Protestant to employ a Catholic, while the natural sources of capital to employ anybody remained mostly in Protestants' hands, the new owners of the best soil being almost wholly of that religion, and such Catholics as were still suffered to own estates being crushed to a condition of poverty and uncertainty. The Irish Protestants of the time seem to have regarded themselves as a divinely chosen people, entered into a Promised Land, from which the "Idolator" must be removed, though we search in vain for proof of the Promise ; and the theological standpoint which led them to exclude the "Idolator,"

led them to capitalise one another the more effectively, which certainly contributed much to the industrial efficiency of the Protestants and to the comparative uselessness of the Catholics.

I have completed the retrospect, but not the picture ; these evils are with us yet, at least in their results. Only a few years ago a typical member of our aristocracy said to me : " My standing instructions to my broker are never to put a penny of my money into anything Irish." He has land, fattens cows, removes the Irish, and remains as typical as ever ; but, economically, he is a monster, and socially not much better, and though his kind may still feel confident in their cows, and secure of their fee-simple in the fattest of our soil, they may rest assured that every ton of beef they ship from unnecessary grass, at the expense of human life, is a ton more to the weight that steadily sinks them to destruction. War may not avail, and the makers of statutes may remain as blind as before ; yet this monstrous thing must end, and he that depends on it. Human Society is full of unforeseen forces which make the future ever undeterminable with accuracy, and which must develop their own process of self-protection against the monstrous. The crushed character of the Irish may have taught them to tolerate unnecessary evils up to the point of self-preservation, or even in a measure beyond it, but they cannot permanently acquiesce in this systematic removal of the man that makes the nation to provide grass for the cows of the man that destroys it. It is violence to the laws of God, nature and humanity alike.

As a result of the causes I have briefly traced and others of their kind, the attitude of the Irish aristocrat towards his plebeian neighbours is quite different from that in England or Scotland ; so different that he will not be in touch with them, even financially, except to draw his rent ; and then our would-be aristocracy, our mob most despicable of all, take their stand-

point from the stranger at the top among us. The bank-clerk is more supercilious towards the peasant who produces his £70 a year for him than even the landlord. The peasants regulate their contempt for one another on the basis of a cow more or less, and even our tinkers have their castes, as I showed in a recent chapter. The pride peculiar to mediocrity perverts our social structure to its very foundations.

Directly, or indirectly, down to the bottom, we take our standpoint from the stranger at the top, even while "abolishing" him, and the standpoint he affords us is so fatally wrong, even to himself, that we are all bound to go wrong together. The truth is that we have despised industry, and that we despise it still. Were it not so, our publicans would not be ashamed to make engineers of their sons. Our contempt for industry is one of the main causes for our not investing in ourselves the personal capital (industrial character) that would enable us to command and to use all other kinds of capital, and to produce all kinds of wealth now unnecessarily imported, and paid for by the flesh, the blood, and even the immortal souls of our emigrants. The campaign against the "idolator" has but changed its weapons to accommodate the time, and what the bayonet failed to do formerly is now done more effectively by the subtle mechanism of the economic process. I have found Protestants often unwilling to capitalise the labour of Irish Catholics, and this on the assumption that no good could come to the country until "Romanism" was removed, and "the chosen people" put completely in possession.

The obvious antidote would be the "Idolators" capitalising one another, as the Protestants have done, but "pride of race" makes them ashamed of industry, and anxious to copy the predominant intruder. But they don't copy him in everything. While the Protestant sets his son to become efficient

in productive industry, the Catholic of the same social level puts his son into a "larned" profession. Catholics will not invest personal capital in themselves or make themselves fit to employ each other; comparatively, they keep public-houses to set each other drunk, and pass strong resolutions calling on the Government to provide them with the rewards of sobriety. The Irish capitalist is almost wholly an agrarian or alcoholic quantity throughout three-fourths of Ireland; to be precise, an enormous amount of our capital, if not the bulk of it, is engaged in grazing and drink, the two prime curses of Ireland, and the surplus income is invested abroad, diminishing the home market even for alcohol; and meanwhile, Parliament itself is controlled by the grazier and the publican in so far as Ireland is concerned. We have Nationalist Members of Parliament who make eloquent speeches on Temperance to "their fellow-countrymen" in Great Britain, and who do not venture a syllable on the subject in their own constituencies.

The professional economist, especially if an Englishman, may see an apparent self-contradiction in these chapters on Irish capital; he will ask: "Since productive industry cannot be carried on without land, labour and capital working together, does it not follow that the grazing industry must employ labour?" It must, the minimum, say, one family to a thousand cows, on an area which, under tillage, might find employment and a living for 300 to 400 people, not to mention the indirect employment created by these in the commodities they would have to buy from products of industries outside their own. Every family removed by the grazier counts more than a family to the nation, by the amount of the products of other families they would consume if they remained. We can consume nothing without employing somebody in some degree somewhere.



## CHAPTER XII.

### RESUMÉ.

**I**N this chapter I attempt to bring to a point the argument developed in the previous ones.

Land, Labour and Capital are the Agents of Production, and each being an essential, a defect in one is a defect in all, with so much less wealth produced, and so much less life supported by it; in other words, the production of wealth succeeds or fails, and the material conditions of the people rise or fall, in proportion as Land, Labour and Capital are efficient in themselves, and efficiently associated for industrial purposes by the people.

A clear distinction ought always to be observed between land in its agricultural aspect and land in its more important aspect, that is, in its relation to economic production generally. There is no productive industry whatever that is not in some way dependent on land, directly or indirectly, and this not only in respect of rent for the site of productive operations, but also, and often in a more important way, in respect of the various products of the land which are the raw material for other industries, in respect of its accessibility to productive enterprise, and in respect of the attitude towards industry of those by whom the land is controlled. Wool, for example, is a finished product of the farm, but it is only the raw material of the cloth maker, and a wool-producing region attracts the manufacturer, other things being equal.

We have a still more concrete example to illustrate the problem of accessibility. The limestone country around

Dunmore is very good for wool, and a wealthy gentleman in that town has for years been trying to buy or lease from the landlord a site for a new woollen factory, but the landlord would not even reply to his letters. On behalf of the landlord, it is explained that he travels abroad, that he allows nobody to open his letters, and that he opens them himself only in large batches that have accumulated for months. Thus because one man likes to travel abroad, and does not like attending to his correspondence, we may have hundreds of people emigrating from Ireland who might otherwise be employed at Dunmore.

As a direct product of the land, a pound of wool is worth about fifteen pence, but as a product of the factory it may be worth three-and-sixpence, so that if the land did not produce the wool the loss to the nation would be only one-and-threepence, whereas the loss is two-and-threepence through the land not being accessible for the factory. In this actual case we see how the land is just 80 per cent. more important to Wealth Production, in respect of a factory than it is in respect of agriculture, and we see also how economic development, agricultural or otherwise, is limited by the control of the land. Yet if a people have not the right to live by the use of their country's land, they can hardly be said to have any rights whatever. Where the right to live is violated, all other rights count for little.

Those more important aspects of the land are particularly neglected in Ireland, because such a great majority of us live by agriculture, and fallaciously assume that we must remain so always. The assumption tends to perpetuate the fact, and a people have more than double difficulty in doing what they believe they cannot do. In modern conditions, a merely agrarian people are likely to be a decaying people, and especially when they are so inefficient as we are, even in agriculture, losing not only the wealth that is in the soil itself, but also the

increased wealth that would necessarily be produced in non-agricultural industries if our agriculture were efficient. Better farming would mean more consuming power, with increased demand for the labour and the products of all other industries as well ; it would mean also a higher standard of economic efficiency in the agrarian population, fitting them more to develop Industrial Production in other pursuits when they have left the farm. Such are my necessities for giving so much more space to Land than to Labour or to Capital, and to Land in its agricultural aspect than to its greater aspect in relation to the Production of Wealth all round. I have to follow the peculiar and abnormal conditions of the country, and not my economic sense of proportion.

As regards the agricultural aspect, we have violated the competitive principle, and drifted through statutes into a sort of Socialism, minus the socialistic virtues ; we have thus also put property above its use, which puts character below privilege, making Man of less consideration than Matter, which, of course, tends to degrade the people as well as making them poor. Substituting a sort of economic irresponsibility on prairie values, for the competitive necessities essential to the growth of capacity, we necessarily lose in the wealth of the land, and also in the character of the people, not only in our farming, but also in the industries supported by it, and in those deriving their workers from the farm. Brought up to good farming, which requires the exercise of the higher faculties and the habits of industrial discipline, a man is more likely, in respect of means and character alike, to succeed in other occupations, and to increase the progress of these, than a man brought up in the comparatively barbarous conditions of agriculture that still prevail in most of Ireland ; and so the son of the Scotch peasant designs the building, and estimates the

cost, while the son of the Irish peasant rises to carrying up the bricks and mortar, with all the mental and moral disabilities attached to the hod as compared with the higher instruments of architecture ; and the two men often come to meet on such unequal terms from farms affording equal opportunity, simply because one of the farms is well worked, and the other degraded. Worse still, the architect is not at work in Ireland, but in some other country, where our hod-man must go to spend his wages, and to drink his beer, taking out of Ireland the cost of raising him from the cradle, along with the energies that might repay it at home.

Such are the results of settling the occupation of our land without regard to its economic uses or the healthy rivalries of productive competition which bring out the economic and social faculties of a people. It is probably worse than Socialism could well be, for Socialism would at least have the land the property of the whole nation, with the will of the nation free to insist on its highest uses in the collective interest, instead of holding it as an encouragement to incapacity, and an asylum for the incapables who are not good enough even to emigrate.

Our Land-Acting enables even the lunatic to monopolise the soil by which the nation might prosper, and he is much a lunatic who, on a good farm and a title in the fee-simple at "prairie value," cannot pay the instalments, and so propagate his lunacy for the benefit of Ireland a Nation in the future.

Even where our new landlord does not happen to be a lunatic, he prefers £50 a year and no work to £100 a year and efficiency in his farming. The nation and the family lose the other £50 a year, and all the additional industry of all sorts that would grow out of it, double the shop-keeping, for example, in the country as a whole ; but the father of our grass-grown family will not see that, though we are all agreed that it is rather

barbarous to deprive one's children of a doubled standard of living when it is quite practicable to intelligent industry. This new-made landlord of ours is very numerous, and having "the vote," elects his like, the way the world over, but surely more ruinous here than anywhere else in the world. Have we not got "The Land for the People," and is he not "The People?"

I have seen our voting friend in fat Meath, on sunshine and whisky, growing lazier as the land grew richer, lazier still as he perfected his new title in it; agitating, violently agitating, denouncing his landlord as a rack-renter, in which he may have been right, and paying £2 an acre, when he did pay, in which he may have been wrong; then settling down to his green fee simple, paying purchase instalments of only 27/- an acre for his estate, with more sunshine and more whisky, but with less of the labourer, and not one sod of tillage to disturb his green, alcoholic, patriotic peace; and then, two years after his "vesting order," I have seen him charging as high as £12 an acre to any Irish worker who, being mad enough to remain in Meath, wanted a bit of God's earth to raise potatoes for his young rebels; all this on some of the best soil in the world, near royal Tara, within six miles of Navan, where, within living memory, and before we began Land-Acting, three hundred stout reapers presented themselves on a harvest morning, without implements beyond the hook, all employed, profitably employed; where now, they tell me, the rats cannot live, most of the capable having gone, and the incapable remainder having forgotten how to grow corn. The last argument I heard in Meath against tillage was that the corn grew too big for the two-horse reaper, but that "farmer," too, has got his "vesting order," his sunshine, his whiskey, and his heart-felt desire to go to grass, on half his practicable income, to be rid of the labourer and of agricultural efficiency. Did not the old land-

lord live idly? Then, what use becoming a landlord and having to work? The labourer! What of him? He is merely Ireland, the Irish Nation, and we are concerned with the making of many landlords, on sunshine, whisky, and patriotism. He that taxed Labour and Ireland to £2 an acre was a rackrenter, but he that raised the figure to £12 an acre is—a patriot!

Three hundred reapers in Navan, all employed, in our time, and little or no machinery or science in agriculture; then, science and machinery, with an exodus of rats and men from Meath, restoring these richest plains in Europe to the pastoral barbarism in which their natural fertility first attracted our prehistoric kings, and founded our little Pagan Empire, on the principle of the richest spot for the strongest man. No Land Acts then, and the Pagans could admit at least some sort of competitive efficiency in control of the soil, if only on the standard of throwing a stone spear in the common defence, and out of it all, they could at least feed some sort of human, Irish mouths, if only those of slaves and flunkies, having economic frontiers of their own, with a life, an Irish social organism, self-contained and self-supported; but now, with agricultural chemistry and two-horse reapers, Land Acts and frock coats, Christianity and a Department of Agriculture, our grass feeding beef for other peoples, and our economic centre of gravity in another country, these rich lands, and all their like, are obviously of less use to Ireland than they were under *Olamh Fodla*, and so must remain until we grasp the plain fact that the use made of the land is at least twenty times as important to the nation as any question of changing the ownership from one set of agrarian incapables to another.

Where were our landlords, and what were our tenants doing, when science and machinery came to impoverish instead



of employing and enriching them? Our landlords were out fighting for the big empire, on incomes from the Irish reaping hook, never thinking that newly invented machines had a way of destroying those who would not study and employ them. Our tenants had neither the capital nor the knowledge for it, and while the landlords of other countries helped to put their lands under the new order of things, securing their titles and their incomes, our Irish landlord brought his British army to back him in collecting rents that could no longer be made with reaping hooks. He would have as much out of the old hook as the new reaper, assuming one man to be as strong as two horses, but he would do nothing to provide either the hook or the reaper. If he could not get rent, he could at least evict, and the evicted being rebels, the big empire had no objection, but, with no advance in knowledge or in the means to apply it, the new tenant was as helpless as the evicted, and so it continued until eviction worked itself out automatically, and still never a thought of giving men the tools by which alone they might produce rent. Our Irish landlord could study science and machinery in their naval and military application, apart from Ireland, but not in connection with his Irish property or the tenants on it, and so gradually he cut himself off from his economic base, with the local publican taking his place as the leader of the people.

Still, it worked in some sort of way until the big empire itself, having given Demos "the vote" at home, felt shamed into doing the same in Ireland, and where was our landlord then? He had lost his place in Ireland without gaining any place with the British, unless to go out and get himself shot in their business, but his Irish income would not enable him to do even that. They made it impossible for him to go to Parliament. They passed measures that marked down his rent by 40

per cent. or more in obedience to his enemies, and having destroyed his purse, they made his tenant joint owner with him to destroy his peace. Then, they went over his head to consult with the plebeian representatives of his tenants as to what must be done with him as a sort of human by-product of the social evolution, and finally they sent him drifting down the dirty stream of Irish public life on a three years "Bonus," and his debts not fully paid. Poor landlord !

Still, he would not turn to his own people, who, in their hearts, loved an aristocrat. In his dog-like loyalty, so ill-directed, and with a pride more ill-directed still, he, our blue blooded one, of the broad acres and of Norman line, went over to moan and groan before British shop-keepers and factory lads, who never could value the finer pathos of a patrician, and laughed at him accordingly, at the same time voting for Home Rule. Poor Irish landlord ! It is hard, and the British are callous, but never was there a more fitting end to a class living for one country at the expense of another. At present, I believe, they are beginning to study agriculture, and it is really better than turning rebels. The wonder is that an arrangement so unnatural lasted so long.

Concerning the profitable use of land, there are two things of the first importance, yet simple enough for a child, and during my five years in Ireland, I have not met one tenant farmer who knew about them. The first has to do with the feeding of a beast. To keep his condition just as it is, no better and no worse, a beast must eat a certain quantity, even in Ireland, but, obviously, all that food is lost, no matter how long continued ; yet a little more food above the losing point, and, as a rule, the return for this little is so very high that it will pay also for some of the other food, that which went before the point of profit ; and so on, until the whole food is paid

for, before that point and after. Yet Irishmen keep beasts from month to month without improvement or declining, giving what is lost, and refusing what would come back doubled. The market price may go up, but it may go down, and these things cancel each other in the long run, leaving it a plain fact that the food which adds nothing to the beast is lost food, to the owner generally, and to the nation always. The Americans call these "the Food of Support" and the "Food of Production," which are very good terms, but the Irish do not even know about the names, so busy are they voting and making new landlords.

The other unknown quantity has to do with manures. All manuring of land, artificial and otherwise, is reducible to three substances, in their conditions and combinations—Nitrogen, Potash and Phosphates. By these three, every kind of crop, every kind of arable land, and every condition of soil can be dealt with ; and still more important, these three substances, in their artificial forms, are now so perfected that they can be used by themselves, and, failing farmyard stuff, can substitute it profitably and permanently. In Connacht at least, I do not think there are twenty tenant farmers to the county who know these very simple and very important facts about farming, as regards the beast or the land. Farming, especially in Ireland, is about the only occupation by which a man can live with knowing or studying it, which indicates how well one might live by it if he attended to it as we have to other occupations.

Yet another fact to illustrate our ruinous farming. During a few weeks in the Spring just past, 300 tons of artificial manures were delivered in Kiltimagh, County Mayo, almost every pound superphosphate of 25 per cent. purity or under. As a rule, there is unnecessary loss in using any of the three

fertilisers by itself, but that is not all. The farmers could get the same value in about half the quantity, but they are believers in bulk, and would probably take it as an attempt to cheat them if they found a trader honest enough to offer them one bag instead of two for the same money. Analysis, not bulk, is the basis of value, but their fathers never bothered about analysis, and why should they? Half, or nearly half, of the 300 tons is, economically, as if pebbles from Dublin Bay, and for every ton they pay the very high rate of 14s. 10d. from Dublin to Kiltimagh, which means, in unnecessary freight alone, over £100 absolutely thrown away on the 300 tons, every penny of which could be saved by buying the stuff twice as pure, and so paying carriage on only half the number of tons. I do not know how much more than 300 tons went to Kiltimagh this year, but I know it is so every year, and not only in Kiltimagh, but also in all the places like it. The people might be told these things, but, in Kiltimagh, only the priest is free to present truth to the people, and he is probably too busy as a politician to know about an economic event of great importance at the local railway station. There is a similar condition of things as regards seeds and other commodities, and even in Wexford it is shown by the Secretary to the County Committee that farmers get as little as 13s. worth for the £ through buying "cheap," losing 7s. in the £ as a result of trying to save 2s., not to mention the vastly greater loss in the results of the season's cropping. Thus the work done is little, and the little done is so ill-directed that there is every inducement to do less. The Connacht peasant has probably not twopence an hour for his working time, and while the knowledge that might make his hour worth at least twice as much is well established and very simple, no one seems concerned to put him in touch with it. With the nation and its

other industries so dependent on agriculture, and the agriculture in such a state, how can Ireland help decaying? The fact that the peasants can live at all, in such ignorance of their business, shows a good time in store for them when they learn it, but only one kind of man is supposed to teach them, and their condition shows what kind of teacher is that man. As a rule, the man capable to teach them is incapable of having himself labelled for a mob, and no one is allowed to think or do anything unless as a member of an "organisation" The individual is always assumed to belong wholly to the crowd, never in any way to himself, so that before he can help the crowd, he must lose his individuality, which makes him incapable to help anything. This is why all our "organisation" is so stupid.

In proportion as a people remain ignorant of the industries by which they live, they are bound to emigrate or to starve, because other peoples, not remaining ignorant, become able to supply their markets and throw them out of employment in their own country; but while the Belgians are helped by their schools to grow three crops in the year, and carry four cows to the acre, the Irish peasant, barefooted, "studies" "In Memoriam," and annoys Sir Horace Plunkett by adjusting his "moral centre of gravity" in another world.

Why has it never occurred to us to observe how ignorance produces laziness? Knowing nothing about "Food of Production," "Food of Support," the process of fertility, the loss of 14s. 10d. a ton on his manures, or a hundred other things essential to his business, our peasant struggles in his ignorance to find no advance in his condition from year to year. A few potatoes more or less, sound or rotten, and he is happy or famine stricken. The less the result of his work, the less will he like doing it, which means laziness; but the more his

ignorance of it, the less the result, because the less productive must it be. In the world as it is now, the very humblest kind of work must fail unless it has knowledge and ideas in it, but the Irish peasant has neither knowledge nor ideas in his work, which makes it a slavery. Let him but learn about it, adding the mind to the body in it, and then his poor brute strength, hitherto without mind in its slavery, has new eyes put into it, and even something of a soul, by which he can see himself at once in a new world, transformed, comparatively beatified, the consciousness of his added strength from mind and knowledge making a new man of him, doubling, maybe trebling, the return to his work without working any harder. Then his work itself becomes an education and a delight, with a moral centre of gravity in itself, and our man goes forward in his normal strength abreast with the world that has so far trampled over his unnecessary and abnormal weakness.

Why does he get more for his work abroad? Because he can find somebody abroad to put brains into his work for him. Such persons, with brains in their business, have been known to occur even in Ireland, but the peasant himself, led by our statesmen, has passed strong resolutions against them, lest they show how to get £20 an acre out of the soil instead of £2, and so risk that reduction of a few shillings in the rent or in the purchase instalments. It is not in the nature of man anywhere to expend increasing effort for diminishing returns as a permanent condition of his life, and it is not possible, because unless the energy expended brings back at least its equivalent in results to restore it, there must be an ever augmenting margin of net destruction, expressed in emigration, lunacy, political speeches, and any other shapes that may be determined by the local "atmosphere."

In time, the impulse to live better, to do more for the



family, and to satisfy the higher appetites of life, may develop a higher standard of industrial efficiency on the land, but, with the mere motive of a crude will and the habits of a low standard of life substituted for competitive necessity, there is no present need for any such hopeful development, and so the peasant stands to sink lower, in character as well as in pocket, unless on some of the holdings that make work and intelligence a continuous necessity. Contrary to common acceptance, I find some Congested Districts more hopeful than the richest areas.

Human progress implies more and higher activity, but, on the land at least, we have been scheming by statute to evade the need for it, which must prove as degrading to the character of the people as it is to the Productive System, lowering the nation mentally and morally as well as materially. It is not possible to suspend the higher activities of a people in the business of life without degrading them, and, with our eyes open, and the matter in our own hands, we have made the peasant heir to the very conditions which, on our own eloquent proving, brought about the economic and social ruin of the previous landowners. "What is lost to labour," says Professor Marshall, "is lost to the nation and to the world," but our new landlord wants to be rid of the labourer.

Even the institution of marriage among us is vitiated by our agrarian peculiarities, husbands and wives being selected, not on the standard of their character, and not on any other natural basis that could encourage social and moral elevation, but rather on the standard of the farms with which they are associated. As I have shown before, the better the farm, the more useless the man, in many cases if not generally; but it is the farm that is married, so that the farmer reproduces his imbecility for his country's benefit, while the man of ability emigrates. Agitation and the Acts of Parliament accom-

modating it have made the incapable farmer the standard for the rest, suspending the competitive process, which alone could bring out character in the people, and now we pay for it in lunatic asylums filling up, from a population that goes down. In Great Britain, with the tenure of the land open to the fittest man, he, and not the imbecile privileged by statute, is the man most likely to reproduce himself, thereby preserving a capable race on the soil, which is always the primary source of sound human stock in any country.

Much as we may dislike the immorality of pampering the idleness of one class from the work of another, the fact remains that if the Irish tenant had been capitalised by his landlord, or secured in the expenditure of his own capital, with freedom to select him for his efficiency, instead of statutes to protect and perpetuate his uselessness, the competitive freedom thus assured would have necessitated the application of intelligent effort to the soil, and our fugitives might be happy at home ; but our landlord, with his purse from Ireland, and his heart in Britain, plundered the tenant's capital rather than supplemented it, assuring the ruin of both classes ; and now it is assumed that an uneducated class will prosper on the very same conditions that have corrupted and destroyed an educated class.

The peasant, too, is rapidly becoming less Irish, on his British title to the land, as the owner of property is ever with the power that secures his privilege, and especially when the privilege is a title to property in Nature. If the British did not foresee this when they threw our landlord lamb to the agitating wolf, they at least found that they must extend something of the democratic system to Ireland, and then they saw their own convenience in being on the strong side, with the old landlords battered, and no longer of use to them as a garrison ; so that

now, with our new grass garrison, more greedy by their lower standards and standpoints, our Irish industrialist of the future, wanting land to produce wealth, has to deal with a monopolist less enlightened and more avaricious than the last. The smaller the landlord, the less it will take to stir the impulse of his greed ; and the less he is educated, the more greedy. Thus even in our landlordism, we level down, in so far as character is concerned, and a people's want of character can never be compensated by property, especially property like land, which cannot grow bigger or smaller by merely passing from one hand to another. In almost every department of Irish life, and especially in the department of public thought, mediocrity is ever "organised" to dominate distinction. With our dogs and horses, we concede the best place to the best individual, and we train them for their utmost capacity and worth, but among men, we "organise" the inferior to dominate the capable. A hundred fools can make more noise than the wisest philosopher any time, and while our race of beasts goes up, our race of men goes down.

With such disabilities attaching to our land, and through it, to our people, it is no wonder that our labour efficiency should be low. In the crude condition of early times, an inefficient people might count on being protected by the other peoples being as inefficient, but in the conditions of to-day, with the incidence of the world-market coming to control each country's own market more and more, the inefficient people must go down, and a people aiming to maintain any sort of civilisation on a basis of grass, can do it only for a diminishing number : it takes too great an area of grass to secure the comfort of a family, even on Irish standards, and, to make it possible, other families must clear out.

Yet instead of working up to the new conditions of the

world, we are trying to hedge the inefficiency of our workers behind a mediæval formula, and this without even the statutory assurance of a permanent plan. Conceivably, Ireland might prosper under the definition of a mediæval commune, but where are the means to determine even that ? While the rest of the economic world develops on the lines of employer and worker, necessitating higher efficiencies in both, and higher character in the community, we are trying to restore the basis of each worker being his own employer, with the "freedom" to hold both its Land and its Capital useless to the nation. The man who is his own employer is likely to have a bad workman, and it applies to one industry as well as another.

Then, unlike other peoples who have Peasant Proprietorship, and who are free to regulate it from time to time in the interests of the nation as a whole, we have no Government of our own, but merely an authority that shifts contemptibly with every political wind that blows in another country, and dictated by the party conflicts accidental to the public life of another people.

The Irish agricultural labourer wants watching, on his nine shillings a week, and on twelve shillings he might want less watching, for it is easier to maintain a straight conscience on twelve shillings than on nine, not to mention the condition of the stomach, or the number that have to be fed out of that poor wage in that dirty hovel ; but the employer, the capitalist, can pay only nine shillings, because, among other such reasons, he does not know enough about his business to make it so profitable as to pay more, and so we see how a disability in one of the factors to production vitiates them all, and hinders the growth of wealth in proportion. Yet our labour factor is our least hopeless one, for we know as a truth that our workers were once as good as any in the world, and that even now they

learn to hold their own in other countries, notwithstanding their economic demoralisation in Ireland.

In addition to all these economic derangements now degrading Irish labour and Irish character, we make sectarianism a standard in selecting our workers, from the highest offices of the Government to the lowest offices of the stable ; and, of course, every function in life, economic or otherwise, must lose in efficiency in so far as it is governed by standards that do not belong to it. We do not choose a horse by the points of a cow, but we choose a ploughman by the points of a theologian ; therefore, while our ploughmen go down, our cows and horses, having no creed, prosper exceedingly, and it is not clear that there is any gain to theology. Sometimes only a man of the wrong creed can be found at home fit for a particular post, and then we import one, exporting our own unnecessary man in exchange ; and when the home candidate of the right creed has secured his "position," with his fitness for the work a secondary matter, it is not much wonder if he does his duties in a secondary way, his security resting on something other than his efficiency. In the same proportion, the economic efficiency of the nation is necessarily lowered, necessitating emigration and decay as results of what we call "religion." Since we have to plough theologically, it is no wonder that we must think in the same manner, and so the writers among us must always write as "Catholics" or as "Protestants," never as writers, which, of course, helps to keep our literary standards as low as our agricultural. Nothing can develop on any other standards than its own, and in so far as the standards are mixed, the nation must go down with the degradation of its factors.

As to capital, we find a surplus of it to invest in employing the foreigner, but we invest little in educating the faculties

by which we might employ one another. While many of us are always ready to "finish" their children for ornamental and non-productive pursuits, few of us will train anybody to earn a living in the work of Industrial Production. For example, the calendar of Trinity College is quoted to show that nearly half the revenue of that establishment is spent on theology, largely for employment abroad, while there are only two names in the engineering list for one year—a fact which ought to be borne in mind in connection with the vast volume of the nation's energy and means that finds its way into sacerdotal channels on "the other side." In matters economic at least, we must have done with "sides," and face the fact that the Irish people, of all sections, are inclined to the picturesque and the decorative rather than to the stabilities that might evolve something worth decorating. There is no surer way to combine Labour and Capital than by educating the people's capacity to use capital, and there is no surer way to do this than by investing in them what is called "Personal Capital," that is, wealth spent in training their industrial abilities. The wealthy people of the world are always studying where they can find men to take and make good use of their money, but it appears that, out of our prairie values, we can provide more capital in Ireland than capacity to use it.

We need not expect any sudden improvement either in respect of land, labour or capital by itself, or in the classes they represent, because not one of the three factors can advance much without the other two ; but as the disabilities of each in the past have helped to lower the other two with itself, and the three corresponding classes of the people, so in the future, with destructive tendencies less encouraged, and a higher vision to correspond, any improvement in respect of any of the factors may encourage any of the others also, and so tend to restore



that normal economic unity of the people which, in the long run, is the surest motive to their unity in the social and political interests as well as in the economic. Their own painful history in the past thirty years, destroying each other and the nation for what could only lessen its value to them all by the fight, ought to teach them much, for it shows them all worse than they were, and, through them, the nation ; and should these classes, now fallaceously standing for the nation, not see their own interest in re-union, if not the greater interests of the nation, then, it remains for the nation as a whole to find some new way of its own, and so take its destiny in its own hands. As a people, we do not show as yet the capacity to assert the collective will for the collective good against sectional and privileged supremacy, and so it must continue until we get more character into our public life, which, however, is deliberately prevented by organisation of our worst characteristics to dominate our best.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE ECONOMIC INFLUENCES OF RELIGION.

LET it be understood from the beginning that I intend no criticism on religion, but on the economic uses to which it is put and the effect of these on the community. The Catholic leaves the interpretation of religion to authority, but the more faithfully he recognises that principle, the clearer his right, and the greater his need, to insist on freedom in the rest of life.

That religion must exercise economic influence on a people is self-evident, and it follows that different religions must influence a people differently, in accordance with their different ethics of administration and their different relations to life and liberty ; and if it can be shown that religion is used against economic progress, the showing may be a service to religion as well as to life, since religion itself, with all the other interests of the people, must lose by poverty and decay. The spiritual manifestation of a people's character cannot well maintain a high level on a material basis sinking lower, and as the spiritual condition of the average individual is limited by his condition of body, so it must be with the multiplied body we call the public. Only a mean whole can be made of mean parts, and though the individual saint may sustain a high state of soul on a low state of body, it is a thing that no nation as a whole has ever quite succeeded in doing.

It does not appear to me that man has ever been stupid enough or evil enough to invent on the Christian foundation any sort of creed that could harm a people economically, assuming it duly administered; for the Christian creeds in common, as defined to us, recommend in us all the qualities to make us reliable as workers, efficient as employers, and, as land owners, tractable to the economic claims of the worker, of the employer, and of the community dependent on the co-operation of both. The worker, the employer, and the community have at least as much right to live by the use of Nature as the landowner has to live on the use of it by his neighbour, and this also has always been affirmed or inferred in every form of Christianity, no matter how much the principle may be violated in practice or sanctioned in the violation by professional representatives of the creeds. Thus we have no need to criticise religion here, in any of its definitions, however urgent the need to discuss the economic effects of its administration under various of its definitions in Ireland.

During recent years we have had much argumentation in this connection, indicating need for criticism in the country, but all to little purpose, and mainly because the critics failed to observe the distinction between religion and the uses made of it. For example, Sir Horace Plunkett makes a list of anti-Catholic shortcomings in Irish Catholics, calling it "the Roman Catholic Religion," and another gentleman writes quite a series of books to say in substance, "Roman Catholicism is very wicked, and I am a Roman Catholic." So long as people are so differently constituted, we are likely to have different creeds, and it is a pity that educated men should not see the difference between a religion and its misuse. I cannot but think that if this necessary distinction were observed by the critics, the clergy would face criticism in a more hopeful spirit,

even when they stand charged with the misuses which are so prevalent as to be mistaken for the religion itself by a man so fair-minded as Sir Horace Plunkett.

Now, seeing that Christian teaching has such a large part in economic efficiency, and that our economic efficiency in Ireland is so low, the question arises, "To what extent are we Christians in Ireland?" If we were as Christian as we are "Catholic" and "Protestant," could we have sunk so low in the progressive virtues? It is a question for all our creeds, especially for all our ministers. Everywhere, we admit that religion, as defined, encourages economic efficiency, and in Ireland we claim to be a very religious people, yet we are remarkable among the people for economic inefficiency. Such bad fruit from such a good tree makes us curious to interview the gardener, and I should much prefer to see the puzzle explained by a priest, but Maynooth has not produced an economist in a hundred years, though the study is admittedly appropriate to an ecclesiastical curriculum; and if Maynooth cannot produce an economist, how are the clergy likely to administer their power in accordance with the economic necessities of the country? Some of the Anglican bishops decline to ordain any man without at least a pass qualification in economic science, and this in England, where there is so much less need for it, the people being already efficient to work out their own economic salvation.

If, in showing how the administration of religion hinders the economic progress of the people, I have more to say of Catholics than of Protestants, it is because I know more about them, and because there is more need for it. All Protestantism appears to originate politically rather than spiritually, asserting the liberty of the individual against the secular supremacy of sacerdotal power, thereby setting free the faculties that make

for material progress, and confining the priest to religion, which leaves less need to complain of Protestant impediments to the economic process.

Industrial growth anywhere produces and necessitates increased interdependence among individuals and classes, both materially and morally, without reference to creed ; and in many places among the peoples who are economically efficient, the bulk of the capital is owned by one man, and worked by other men, these others being technically efficient to make it reproductive and morally efficient to make it safe ; and when this joint efficiency is so high, enabling the owner of capital to delegate himself, for the common good and his own, on a scope of Employment and Production so far beyond his personal possibilities, there, obviously, a new factor, and a very great one, is added to Production, extending and strengthening its mechanism by the great difference between isolated and co-operative energies. For example :—

I have myself made a farm so successful and so profitable that people come to see it from various places in these islands, and now, assuming normal economic efficiency, I might command capital to extend the work to any practicable scope ; but, in Mayo, I do not see those in whom I could safely delegate myself, and so I remain limited to the small scope that I can superintend personally, deprived of the greater advantages that could otherwise be enjoyed. Until assistance arise that can be trusted for its technical and moral efficiency, I can go no farther, and as the life of the individual is thus wasted, so is the life of the nation. Farther, I could, at least in some measure, overcome the technical disability, but the moral one remains, and, as a layman, I may not touch it. Here is economic work for religion, but, in the conditions, the layman may not attempt it, and there is no one else doing it.

It is not peculiar to agriculture. The bulk of Ireland's surplus millions productively employed abroad is turned over and over year after year in the hands of men whom our investors do not know, and many never see ; and in most of Ireland, this productive association of effort and means remains impracticable, because the wealthy cannot find the capable and the trustworthy in whom to delegate themselves, which not only tends to keep Ireland poor, but also to deprive her of that social strength that grows from the rich and the poor having to depend on one another. For a people bending under the weight of their excessive virtue, these are not pleasant facts, but the nation needs to have them stated and studied.

Almost everywhere in Ireland I have met men who had to give up tillage, not because it would not pay, but because they had been plundered by their employés ; still more men who had not tilled at all, and have no intention to till, for the same reason. In another country these men might be free to say why, and the freedom to state the fact might encourage the moral improvement necessary, but in Ireland the man stating it would require uncommon courage, and so it is not stated, because we have not yet achieved liberty of opinion. The capital that might be profitably paid in wages at home goes for investment abroad ; the labourers who might earn it at home go abroad along with it ; the capitalist remains silent, and no one dares to point out the part played by the moral disability in the economic derangement. By omission at least, the men who stand for religion among us fail here, but they fail not merely by omission, as we shall see presently.

It is significant that the very Catholics who cannot be trusted to work capital in "holy Ireland" develop the morality required when they go abroad among the "heretic" peoples who stand so much higher in this moral department of



economics. In his moral character, as in his other economic abilities, the Irishman shows himself fit to work up to the efficient level everywhere but at home, and it cannot be without its causes. Evading these causes is but perpetuating the evil, at the expense of Ireland and religion alike.

One would expect the pick of moral character in those selected to work in new enterprises since what we call the industrial revival began, and yet we have a most depressing list of defalcations to our discredit, though a large number have been "kept quiet" by those who control our so-called co-operative movement. Not long ago an enthusiastic article appeared in a London paper about a young man who travelled for a commodity in Ireland, and occupied himself "reading O'Growney" in the trains, but it happened that while he read O'Growney, he was "wanted" for having stolen his employer's money. Religion, *per se*, could not encourage men to steal, but while they steal to such an extent as to hinder the investment of capital in employing them, we are entitled to ask how religion is administered among them, and to invite the attention of its administrators to the economic significance; and we are entitled to invite the attention of the Catholic priest in a special way, and with a special responsibility, because he undertakes the shaping of the moral character of the individual and the direction of his conduct generally so much more than any other administrator, and allows so much less for the moral evolution of the individual himself from within. Even where the priest himself is president of the co-operative society the money is missing, and in so far as I can see, the moral disability alone is enough to prevent the normal association of labour and capital over more than half of Ireland, and most in the regions most exclusively Catholic. Yet no other religion appears to me to define a higher standard of honesty in the

individual, which again throws us on the alternative of administration for the reasons—A religion defined so high, and duly administered, could not conceivably produce results so low in our economic morality.

Broadly speaking, any influence on the character of a people is an influence on their economic efficiency, for progress or decay, according to the uses made of it and the fitness of those directing it. In our peculiar conditions no other influence sinks so deep in this way as religion, and no other religion so deep as the Catholic, though in the countries that progress, it is accepted that the pursuits of life do more for character than anything else. In Ireland, however, the pursuits of life are comparatively suspended, so that they cannot develop character, and the development of character is rather left to religion alone, and more to the Catholic religion than to any other, because of its greater power over life.

No other form of Christianity has ever exacted such obedience, commanded such loyalty, inspired such self-devotion or organised such discipline, and I cannot think how this could be, or how it could have so continued through such varying times and conditions without the profoundest truth and force in its defined appeal to the spirit; but the greater the power over life, the more have its interpreters to answer for in the effect on the people, their character and their conditions, not merely in the matter of Faith, which we leave loyally to themselves, but also in the secular destinies that must of necessity be shaped by a power that makes life, character and conduct so completely its own, impelled by Divine sanction, and perfected by the human wisdom of the ages. The charge to administer such a power, to interpret it in the light of eternity and to direct it for the good of life, is truly an awful responsibility, even in the remotest parish priest,

who, if he but grasp even a little of its meaning, will not make it an instrument in the Guardians' election, a parish terror to the Gaelic League, or a Divine menace to the layman looking for light on the problems of his material existence.

It is not for the economist to complain of any power, religious or otherwise, however deep-set or dominant, so long as it is used towards efficiency in the production of wealth and economy in its consumption, but a power so complete as this in Ireland, able to direct the secular life and destiny at will, and always doing so, yet with results so melancholy in the economic outlook, calls for immediate review, in the interests of life and religion alike. Even if we allow that this power has not been used to unfit the people for life, at least we must face the fact that it has failed to fit them for it—while denying to any other power the right of fitting them.

Unlike any other kind of Christian, the Catholic concedes to the priest all right of judgment with authority in religion, that is, the most exalting concession that one man can ever make to another, and one also representing a profound principle in Christian ethics. In accordance with this principle the peasant may rise to the highest place in the highest temple, and the world has hardly a more beautiful example of Faith than the gray patrician of fifty generations bowed for the blessing of the new-made curate, who may have started from the stable; but when that curate has "got his parish," expands his exclusive judgment on religion into his exclusive judgment on everything else, lays down the law on all things for patrician and plebeian together, dictates his "policy" to the statesman, his fees to the doctor, his voting to the citizen, their "opinions" to the public, and so turns his sacred privilege into a secular weapon; then, the highest things we know of are dragged into the dirt, and

character, economic and otherwise, is sunk under a confusion of standards that tend to make the individual a machine rather than a man, with Heaven itself pressed into the process of human demoralisation. That is what we have to-day in Ireland, at least in a measure large enough to assure our economic decay, and so helpless is "the nation" against it that useful men, good Catholics, can have their dismissal dictated by the priest, and be driven out of Ireland for nothing more than uttering their opinions on lay matters peculiarly their own, admittedly in accordance with the liberty defined to them by their Faith. There cannot be much of a nation where this can happen, even in a single case, and I have not found one country parish yet in Ireland without records of the kind. For the few cases that get into print, there are a hundred silenced by the organised terror; and the better class of priests, the young men with souls for their true work and with hearts for their country, are as much victims as the laity. In such conditions, how can the Catholic community in Ireland develop the liberty that produces character or the character that produces progress? We cannot hope for progress where moral cowardice is crowned by "religion."

One of the first economic necessities of Ireland to-day is to teach the priest, in Maynooth, and more particularly outside Maynooth, how to draw the line at making a secular instrument of his sacred privilege; and if the professors of moral theology and the canonists cannot do it, which would be the better way, then, the lay public must do it, in defence of their individual liberties, with all the unpleasant possibilities that usually arise when the welfare of the nation requires the layman to teach the priest his business. Liberty is essential to character, and character is essential to progress, economic and otherwise, but progress of any kind is plainly impossible in so far as one

class of men dictate their liberty, their character, and their conduct in all concerns to all the other classes.

A priest well educated, and spiritually alive to his mission, could hardly turn it into a secular instrument, and wherever we meet such a priest, he usually confines his privilege to its purpose, going into secular affairs merely in his character as a citizen, and accepting the conditions as any other man ; but so rare is this that the public have come to regard the opposite as the inevitable, assuming the priest to be as much above criticism in business as in theology, with the result that they have largely lost their capacity and their judgment in their own affairs. What need have they for judgment if the priest is to decide their secular affairs without regard to their judgment? In such a case, judgment is merely a source of unhappiness, because exciting against the individual the hostility of his strongest neighbour, even to the extent in some places of substituting the clerical preference for the public will in the Democratic process and in its administrative necessities. So long as the lay faculty is thus hindered, it is unlikely to grow, and all departments of life, including the economic, are depressed by the secular uses to which religion is put.

From the very beginning of our lives this vast power is at work against the liberty and the character that could develop our economic efficiency. I remember how, when a little boy, we regarded the "black man" that inspired our awe, but never our love ; how we grew up to think of him as the only person whose judgment could have much value, in religion or in anything else ; how it was assumed as a religious duty that any attempt to differ from him, even about the parish pump, must destroy our business or otherwise make us "an example to the parish" ; how the "education" we got under his "management" made us despise industry, especially the industry by

which we lived ; how he petted the child of the wealthy publican, and ignored or intimidated the child of the poor peasant. In such circumstances, how is youth to develop character for initiative in economic or social enterprises?

I have spent five years travelling and studying in Ireland, but have not yet met one clerical manager of a country school who had exercised his privilege to influence the teaching in economic directions, notwithstanding that the want of economic efficiency removes the people and their religion along with them out of Ireland. If the clerical manager were as much interested in making education useful as he is in dominating it, could this be the case? Great grass tracts could be turned up to-morrow at a profit, with large employment for labour and increased wealth in the country, if only men could be found sufficiently honest and capable to direct the work ; but pilfering alone goes far to prevent such co-operation of labour and capital on the land, while the clergy, with few exceptions, ignore the ruinous significance of it to the nation, to society and to religion.

Teachers are snubbed by the priest for wishing to work little farms in connection with their schools for the benefit of the young peasants, but that is only a detail in the elaborate enslavement of the teacher, whose manager may even send to the commissioners a " confidential " report against him without affording him a possibility of defending himself. I have known a meeting of twelve teachers to pass a unanimous resolution against taking the management from the priests, and every man of them declaring privately after the meeting that their unanimous resolution was the exact opposite of their opinions. How are men so enslaved likely to develop in young people the strength and honesty of character necessary to economic enterprise? Only let character grow, and it will



make its mark on all aspects of life, the economic included ; but while all aspects of character are dominated by one, the religious, and this so distorted in its administration, progress is obviously impossible in any department of life. The progress of a people requires essentially that each department of life should be governed by its own standards, and by its own standards only, but in most of Ireland, we admit for all departments only one standard, namely, the will of the parish priest.

All our " Education " starts from the standpoint of accommodating one creed or another, never from the standpoint of producing efficient workers or citizens. Above all, there is practically no successful attempt to direct education towards fitting the people to earn a living in their own land, which is rightly regarded as the first purpose of education in all progressive countries ; and, while the secular sanction, which alone can rightly direct secular education, is carefully put aside, the clerical control is an obvious failure, not only as regards the secular teaching, but even as regards the religious teaching, which ought to make people morally fit to be employed, and fails to do so.

Throughout civilisation, the tendency, and the necessity, is to give the priest full control of religious education, and to give the people full control of the rest of education ; but though that, and that alone, is the inevitable direction of progress in education, Cardinal Logue announces his preference for the hedge schoolmaster rather than accept it. If, in our education, as in everything else, we accept the conditions of decay, imposed with our own sanction, by men of our own, then, let us face decay as our inevitable destiny, but let us blame only ourselves. It is hard to give us " the control of our own affairs," while we insist on having our affairs and our minds controlled by somebody else.

Let me add here a few actual instances of this power exercised over life by the misuse of religion against the economic progress of the people. Each is a case typical of many I have personally investigated ; but there is no need to get individuals into trouble by giving names and addresses, for it will readily be seen that the facts are only such as can be found in most of Ireland. I know of fifty to the one I mention,

A layman led a creamery to success and profit for years. Then the priest came in, put all "his own men" on the committee, and so forced the layman out. During the next two years, he silenced criticism, and even ignored the constitutional need for the annual general meeting. After two years, they were found to have lost over £1,000. If the layman had done that, he would be open to criticism, but the priest who has done it is above criticism, and any one daring to criticise him would probably get a reputation as "an atheist," which is not a popular sort of reputation in the neighbourhood. The priest's attitude is usually this, "I am the Church ; therefore, when you oppose me, you oppose the Church"—even though the subject is only butter. The priest will neither leave lay matters to laymen, nor allow them to apply lay canons to him when he interferes. We give up our judgment to him in theology, and he must have it so in butter and bacon as well. Very often the layman who would lead the creamery or the bacon factory to success is exactly the one whom the priest dislikes, and lest that layman should succeed, the enterprise must fail ; to have the priest at the top, Ireland must go down, industry must decay, lest a layman lead in butter.

After a layman had started a co-operative society, the priest got the committee to "black ball" him. The "priest's men" only were put in charge, and before long the money was miss-

ing. I do not mean that the priest misappropriated the money, of course ; it was done by one of the men he had put in to keep out the capable one by whom the project had been started. Co-operation might do much for Ireland, but for reasons like these, the clergy make it largely unworkable, and most unworkable where it is most needed. There must be no leading layman, even in butter or bacon, and when the layman is not allowed to lead in lay matters, then the economic process must go down, just as religion would go down if directed merely by laymen.

An expensive official was sent by the Department to lecture to farmers, but the farmers would not come to the lectures without the priest's approval. Then the lecturer went to the priest, who "promised to find me an audience," and when the "audience" was found, it consisted of nine persons, a majority of whom had nothing to do with the control of farms. To prove Plunkett a failure, his work must be stopped. The good he attempts is deliberately hindered to show that he can do no good. It is not because he is a Protestant. The priest appears to hate no layman so much as the Catholic who insists on the liberties defined to him by his own Church, namely, complete deference to the priest in all things of religion, and complete independence of him in all things else, treating him on secular canons when he comes into secular things.

Nothing is more firmly fixed in the minds of many shopkeepers and their peasant customers than that the prosperity or destruction of their business is at the will of the priest, and I know numerous families that have been impoverished in this way, while others have risen from misery to wealth through the priest's partiality. In many places it is enough to know simply that the priest does not wish the people to go to a certain shop. The wish becomes generally known in some way, and then

down goes that shop, often the shop of a good fellow, while a pious ruffian prospers under clerical approval at the other side of the street. While it is accepted as if an article of Faith that the will of the priest means success or ruin to a man's business, how can we have the freedom that produces character or the character that produces economic progress?

I know a doctor who is told by his neighbours that they would prefer to employ him, but that they are afraid, because the priest wants them to employ "his own doctor."

A man bought a farm, on which the local priest had some acres from year to year. The new owner was willing to continue the arrangement, but the priest insisted on setting up a title of his own, in return for absolutely nothing. Because the farmer would not hand over to him £100 worth of his own property, for nothing, the priest organised a boycott against him, and on these facts, he had a police hut near his house for several years to follow. The priest's own parishioners knew very well the immoral tyranny of that boycott, but not a man of them ever dared to stand up for honesty or liberty against the priest. The victim this time was a Protestant.

Nine witnesses against a medical man in an inquiry declare that they are giving evidence merely to please the priest, who has a personal quarrel with the doctor. Officers of police are continually pressed by priests to remove, to punish or to promote policemen. Crown prosecutions are ordered by the Castle merely because the priest wants to hurt a victim, with the Government as his weapon, and in such a case recently the perjury broke down so badly that the Crown had to get leave of the court to cross-examine its own witnesses. Priests preside over secret meetings of public bodies, and dictate what must be done at the public meetings afterwards. Guardians canvassed by medical candidates declare that they have no

choice but as the priest decides, and decline to promise their votes until he has decided for them. A priest says—"Any man that does not vote for my candidate is a black sheep in the flock." Another says, in a "sermon" about the Christmas collection—"If I find any one who does not pay, I'll take care that he is exposed. . . If I find any one who does not pay more than a shilling, I'll have his name sounded all over the parish." The allotment of larger holdings to congested tenants is prevented because the people think the priest would be annoyed at their leaving his parish, and the money of the Congested Districts Board is thus wasted "fixing them up" on holdings on which an economic existence is permanently impossible. Many such tenants have told me they would remove gladly were it not for the priest, but if I mention their names, they may be persecuted.

When a person in the family has money, and grows old, the priest often becomes lawyer to him as well as spiritual adviser. In such a case one of the judges pointed out quite lately that it would save much litigation of an unpleasant kind if the Bishops followed the example of His Grace of Dublin, who has prohibited his priests acting as lawyers and making wills.

The boycotting examples are the most interesting of all. A layman differs from the priest on a matter of butter, bacon or politics, and once it is known that "the priest is agin him," the mob is let loose on him, many of them thieves, who regard it as a virtue to rob him, and who, even if they go to gaol, are still "on the priest's side," under the redeeming approval of "the only true religion." The process is essentially cruel, its methods essentially savage, and the religion of Christ is employed by the priest as its driving power.

Such dreadful conditions of religion and of life are com-

mon in Ireland to-day, and so triumphant that we dare not discuss them. We see how they must act on character and faculty, crippling the energies by which the people might learn to work and to live at home instead of emigrating.

In studying the economic conditions of a people like ours we can never get away from their character, or from the uses made of religion against the economic efficiency of their character. When character is vitiated at its source, the evil must have due effect in every department of the collective life, including the department of wealth production. Faculties can be effectively applied only in so far as they are free, in business, in art, in thought, or in anything else ; but throughout most of Ireland character is assumed to consist, not in the individual himself, but rather in the parish priest's approval of him, generally setting up the standard outside the individual himself, and seldom recognising his inherent powers of development from within, which alone can make him an efficient unit in the modern world. Instead of growing a character of his own, and prospering on it at home to the advantage of the nation, our youth grows up as I have described, and then gets from the parish priest a character ready-made on a slip of paper, which will, no doubt, entitle him to carry a hod or to mix "cock-tails" in America.

As a necessary result, the nation and the Church are deprived of the moral, mental, and economic advantages that ought to be enjoyed by the people and the country from the character and the abilities of laymen, in accordance with the liberties defined to them by the Church itself.

What are those liberties ? Listen to Leo XIII.—"Liberty, the highest gift of Nature, which belongs only to intellectual or rational beings, confers on man this dignity, that he is 'in the hand of his counsel,' and has power over his actions. But the



manner in which this dignity is borne is of the greatest moment, inasmuch as on the use that is made of liberty the highest good and the greatest evil alike depend. Man, indeed, is free to obey his reason, to seek moral good, and to strive after his last end. Yet he is free also to turn aside to all other things, to follow after false dreams of happiness, to disturb established order, and to fall headlong into the destruction which he has voluntarily chosen." Who can ask for more liberty than that?

I quote from *The Voice of the Church*, published in America, where Catholicism flourishes, and the priest keeps his place, but *The Voice of the Church* remains unknown in Ireland, where we qualify to be exported as "priest-ridden greenhorns," and where the Church itself sinks to decay with the rest of life from want of the liberties officially defined to us by the Holy Father Himself. When we compare the Pope's ideas of liberty with the behaviour of my Irish parish priest, the wonder is how both can belong to the same Church.

The Press reports Pius X. to this effect :—"The proper field for the priest is the Church. There he shall have no contradiction. . . . He shall not be a party man, for some, against others." To verify the exact source of this, I called at the Catholic Truth Society's offices in Dublin, but was astonished to find that they did not even know about it, and that they did not keep in stock a single utterance by the present Pope. The Catholic Truth Society of Ireland is controlled by the clergy.

In his Encyclical for 1903, Pius X. remarks :—"There are not wanting among the clergy those who exercise themselves according to their bent on works of more apparent than solid utility : but not so numerous are those who, after the example of Christ, take to themselves the words of the Prophet :—' The Spirit of the Lord hath anointed me, to preach the Gospel to

the poor He hath sent me,' etc. . . . Not the priests alone, but all the faithful, ought to concern themselves with the interests of God and souls." How different this from the Irish plan of shutting up the layman, not only on interests of "God and souls," but also on interests of bacon and butter.

Ireland suffers, not from "the Roman Catholic Religion," but rather from the want of it, and it remains for the Catholic laity to make good the defect.

Many of our priests see that wherever the growth of industry develops the economic faculties, a lay life grows up that will not accept their dictation outside their sphere, as "party men, for some against others," and apparently they think it better to reign over ruin than to take their due and proper place in progress. Their dominion over decaying life appears to be dearer to them than their service in its development or in its elevation. They are ready to welcome such growth as they can dominate, but that is of necessity growth downward, because no one interest of life can dominate all others without all going down together, the one that dominates as well as the rest. We want religion in every department of life, but in so far as it is made an all-round dominion, it must itself sink with all that it dominates.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### SUGGESTIONS.

#### *LAND.*

WHY not make the tenant's title to Fee Simple conditional on the farm doing its share to support the nation, say, by tilling a proportion every year ; and, failing that, where the farm is large enough, why not cut off economic holdings, on the same conditions, for men capable of using the soil ? It would be much less revolutionary and much more constructive than degrading the land, lowering its market value by agitation, and then making the agitator the landlord, at the lowered price, without paying a penny of his own, but actually with a reduction on his annual charge. Ireland is the only country in the world where a man can buy real estate by receiving money instead of paying. Were it confiscation of the individual by the nation as a whole, for the nation's good, then, some ethical defence might be found for it, if only that the individual, confiscated, might in some measure be compensated in his share of the increased national good ; but it has been from the beginning a mere fight for the land between two mere classes, while the nation has looked on, decaying, as it well might, and as it must until we see how much more important to the people as a whole is the use of the land than the personnel of property in it. Behind the whole business there is an element of organised immorality, and this getting for nothing, by statutory sanction, has already helped

to demoralise multitudes, lowering efficiency on the soil instead of increasing its production. The former owner took a kind of pride in his inefficiency, and his successor, still less enlightened in his pride, has begun to develop the same attitude. What is the use being a landlord and having to bother about efficiency? It is the State, not the tenant, that makes him owner, at its expense, not at his; therefore, the State has a right to exact conditions, and to secure the land being useful. Indeed, that was the primary intention. No one ever thought of getting the State to interfere at all except on the ground of increasing the use of the land to the nation, but that purpose is obviously defeated so long as the State itself, by precluding the competitive process, leaves the land to be controlled without regard to the fitness of those controlling it; and now it remains for the nation to find a substitute for the competitive process, and some way out of its statutory enslavement, which promises to be even more fatal than the methods of the old landlord. I could show many good reasons why emigration might be less, and the production of wealth more, if the State had left Irish landlords and tenants to work out their destiny among themselves, and if the British find this semi-socialism so excellent, why do they not impose it on themselves? The tenant, having given nothing for his Fee Simple, can lose nothing by giving it up, but rather than give it up, he would probably learn to use it, which might improve his character as well as his pocket. Let him have a few years' notice, and if he cannot then till a third, let somebody have it who can, paying, of course, for "tenant's interest," its value when converted, but no increment in respect of Fee Simple. I would not take a sod of "his property" from him so long as he used it; I would simply make his using it a condition of his having it. Some such obligation has attached to Fee Simple almost every-

where, and if our new landlord may not be put under tribute to support an Irish army after the time-honoured manner of most nations, let us have him observe at least his economic obligations. It is from every point of view intolerable that he should own the earth as a mere disguise and support for his own privileged uselessness, with British statutes to back him in perpetuating Irish decay. What I suggest is not new. The late Mr. M'Cann saw it all, and created thirteen new tenancies on this basis, but with the Tillage Clause even more extensive than I propose. They have to till one-half on "the Teltown Plots," and when I last saw them they were doing admirably, some of the tenants admitting that they considered their leases already worth £200 each, though they had not been two years in occupation. These "plots" are in many ways interesting. For example, the tenants nearly all complain of being forced to till, though they all admit that they are the better for their tilling every year. Could anything more clearly prove that what they want is their own privileged ease, and not efficiency, a higher standard of living or a higher standard of production from the soil? We are regarded as an idealistic people, and yet, almost to a man, we aim at low conditions of life, with ease, rather than at the character and efficiency for higher conditions, which necessarily tends to degrade the nation, as if we had in us a surviving element of the savage, whose conceptions of life are so low that raising it is not worth the effort to him. As regards the ranch owner, take his net income from grass over five years, and offer the land in economic holdings at the average per acre, with leave to purchase, and with the Fee Simple as security for his fixed capital invested. The ranchman's own statement for income-tax purposes, no doubt always truthful, might be taken as a basis, and if tenants could not be got on these conditions, then, it is plain that our men are less

capable than cows to get wealth out of the soil, a fact which must have its effect in any conditions of tenure or ownership. If the beast knows how to make £2 an acre, while man knows how to make only £1 10s., then, in the long run, the beast must remain, and man must go. There is no apparent power in statutes to prevent it, or even in the resources of organised society. What has been happening to us on the land is this : First, we got Parliament to suspend competition between man and man among us, securing the idiot in control of the soil as much as the most capable ; then, without competition, down went efficiency, as it was bound to do, and now we find ourselves unfit to compete with a cow in producing wealth from the soil. There can be no hardship in preventing the individual harming the nation, especially when it prevents him harming himself also, which the tillage condition undoubtedly would, since tillage is profitable when efficiently conducted, thereby requiring the tenant to make use of his brain, raising his character as well as filling his purse, and raising the national conditions in the double way accordingly. Mr. A. J. Crichton is working at a plan to tax the ranch, and to finance economic holdings out of the tax.

### *LABOUR.*

Why not try a small colony of landworkers, housed, fed and paid in one of the numerous derelict mansions throughout the country ? Prove one a sound investment, and others would follow. Those at work would be gradually trained, technically and morally, for further extension of the system. The great drawback in all our object lessons to date is that they are not self-supporting, but subsidised from one source or another, which makes confidence in them unreasonable. It is hard for



a young fellow to come home with much belief in himself from a place where he has learnt agriculture at a loss in carrying it on every year, and accordingly these scientific agriculturists of ours are always trying to become officials or teachers. Having learnt fully how to make a loss in farming, they quite naturally prefer to apply that kind of knowledge at the expense of the public, and not at their own. I have met only one of them in all Ireland who had had confidence enough in himself to start on his own account, and even he depended mainly on agricultural showmanship, with bounties from the public purse to bolster him. In short, the few among us who study agriculture do so to teach it, not to practise it, and they learn it in such a way as to discourage the practice of their knowledge by anybody. The Department replies, "But we are here to teach, not to make a profit"—as if the making of the profit were not the essential thing in the teaching. The greenest agrarian in Connacht could teach how to farm at a loss. If they have really learnt farming, why do they not take farms and pocket the profits instead of delivering lectures? It is not merely my opinion, but also a fact of experience, that a number of young fellows, organised as I suggest in one of our waste establishments, could make mixed farming quite profitable; and I believe that if it cannot be done generally, it is from want of trustworthiness in the people more than from anything else. That most instructive book, *The Green Republic*, deals at length with this aspect of Irish agrarian economics. Why not at least attempt to develop in the young people at school some character which might enable them to apply their knowledge? They teach drill to peasants, but nothing of husbandry. True, most of this knowledge is wrong, but it is not all wrong, and what happens to be right is almost as useless as the rest. It is one thing to get knowledge, which they call

“education”; it is another thing to make use of knowledge, which I call character, especially character for enterprise. In its relation to any new idea, or to anybody attempting a new thing, the very atmosphere of the country school is mentally vicious, and yet it is a matter completely in our own hands. We may not control finance, and there may be a final veto over curriculum, but surely atmosphere and local standpoint are necessarily of our own creation. We utter many words, and everybody teaches everybody else what to do, but we do little, construct less, and originate nothing.

### *CAPITAL.*

It is less easy to make constructive suggestions in connection with capital, but there is at least one direction worth a word. What we call “Revivalists” and “Irish Irelanders” are very numerous, and not so poor that they could not capitalise a pioneering effort of some sort. In this way they have done practically nothing, and it looks as if they had not much confidence in their own doctrines. Why should not those who call themselves Industrial Revivalists take one of these deserted mansions, and make it hum with agricultural industry? Doctrines that have no effect on life are not worth preaching.

### *THE PRIEST.*

Deference to the priest in all things of religion, and treat him merely as one man in all things else. That is the authoritative direction of the Church, as laid down by the Pope—“He (the priest) shall not be a party man, for some against others,” and the “proper field” for him is “the Church,” where he “shall have no contradiction.” These are only the injunctions of the Catholic Church, and if only we could get the priests to observe them, the Orangemen would be Home Rulers almost

to a man, with a Legislature of our own in Ireland, and the will of the people really free to work out their economic destiny. All the Orangemen ask is that the priests obey the Pope.

### *EDUCATION.*

Complete control over religious education by the clergy, and complete control over all other education by the people. That has been the aim of education for more than a century throughout civilisation, and if we look around us, we can see that nations are great and prosperous in proportion as they have realised it. It is very simple, and fully seen except in Ireland. Everywhere but in Ireland, the fact is accepted that clerics cannot dominate secular education without damage to it—and everywhere but in Ireland we have economic progress. Why should the priest claim to control the teaching of chemistry any more than the chemist should claim to control the teaching of theology? The intrusion of the priest in the laboratory goes on until the chemist is tempted to invade the pulpit, and then we have a sort of chaos, at the expense of religion and of life. Our clergy assert that the Irish people are fit to govern themselves, but they assume that they are unfit to educate themselves, which is a much smaller matter. A people unfit for the smaller business of self-education are obviously unfit for the greater business of self-government, and until they try, they may remain unfit. Our schools are now managed largely by the clergy, and the technical experts tell me that their own work is largely useless, and the money largely wasted, because the education is so badly managed. Meantime, economic efficiency depends in an essential way on technical efficiency—but the priest stands in the way, and will not permit the people to take the responsibility on themselves, though it is an essential in their

national evolution. Ireland may well be a failure. She is a failure even as a preparation for eternity, having to go so largely to America for the finishing touches, as she sends her bullocks to Scotland. She must remain a failure until she employs her faculties in support of her life, and this can never be without a standard of individual liberty that is as yet unknown in the country. No Catholic asks or needs more liberty than his religion affords him, as defined by the Pope, but the religion is one thing and the priest is another. The religion and the Pope give us Catholicism; most priests will let us have nothing but Parochialism. The most anti-catholic spirit and standpoint I know in Europe outside Turkey I have found among those who call themselves "Catholics" in Connacht, and I know even wealthy families whose ordinary affairs of business are directed every day by priests, against their own will and judgment, so complete is the organised terror. That is not the Religion, and though these people think they are Catholics, they are only priests' slaves. If they were really Catholics, they would be free, as the Pope wishes to see them. A system based on slavery cannot last, even in Ireland, if only because it must destroy the community on which it lives, and the Irish priest is sawing at the branch on which he sits. He cannot degrade liberty without degrading life, and he cannot degrade life without degrading his own position. It remains to be seen whether the lay Catholics of Ireland are able to rescue their Religion and their nation from this pitiful disgrace. To a man, they will agree with me about the facts and their effect, but rarely among them can I find the man who will dare to state the facts with me in the light of day. His rarity proves the perfection of the slavery, and therefore, the want of real Catholicism in Ireland. We die out under a Parochial terrorism, and call it "the Catholic Religion."

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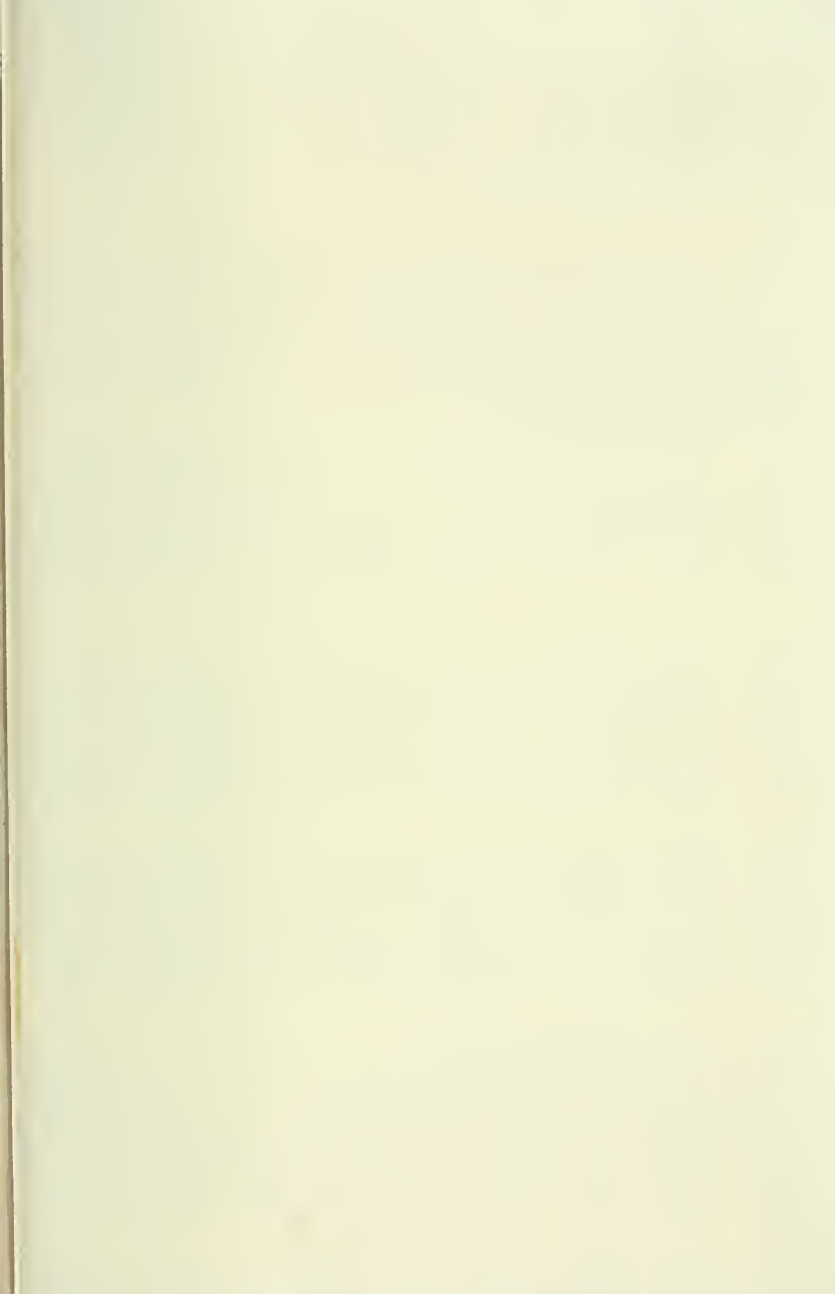
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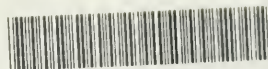
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